

# Gamers' Republic

COMPUTER & CONSOLE ENTERTAINMENT MAGAZINE



## MDK2

**MAKING A KILLING ON  
SEGA'S DREAMCAST**

## PLAYSTATION 2 PREVIEWS

ARMORED CORE 2, ETERNAL RING,  
AND ODDWORLD: MUNCH'S ODDYSSEY

## NEW DC GAMES!

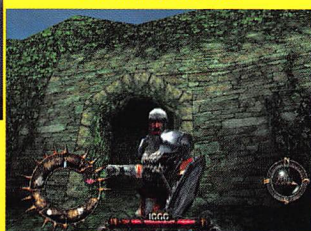
SOUL FIGHTER, LEGACY OF KAIN,  
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ARCADIA AND MORE!

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### ARMORED CORE 2



### DRACONUS



### ETERNAL ARCADIA



■ NEW BUFFY AND FUTURAMA ■ AN INTERVIEW WITH KAN NAITO ■  
■ Y2K INDUSTRY PREDICTIONS ■ MOTOCROSS SHOOTOUT

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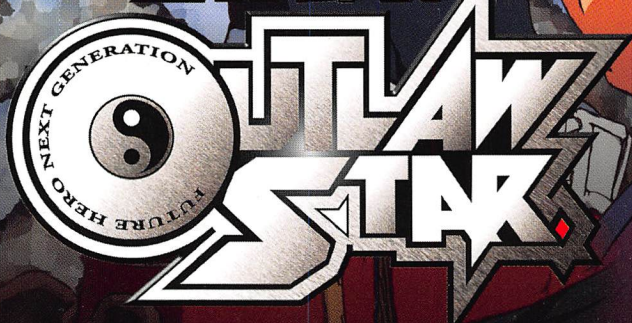


RAISING ANIM

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星方武俠



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Head to head to head to head combat

# TURBO RAGE

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# January 2000

## Gamers' Republic MANIFESTO

Well, here we are on the brink of the new Millennium. I suppose if all hell breaks loose, this'll be the issue that gets pillaged. So if you've stolen this magazine out of a busted-up newsstand and are running amok among the burning refuge, be careful not to bend it — it's a collector's issue!

Seriously, if you ask me, the clock is going to strike 12, and aside from a few whackos going berserk, the only thing that the year 2000 is going to affect is sales of Alka Seltzer. Personally, the coolest thing about the year 2000 to me is the actual phrase itself. It's actually the year 2000! Conan O'Brien's going to have to change his sketch! As far as the new year's effect on gaming goes, it seems that we're on the brink of a new day, as so many new factors are seeping in to mold the greatest hobby on Earth. The crossover with merchandising, internet-ready DVD-based consoles, and Hollywood, which seems to want to get into the game more than ever, is quite compelling. What will this mean to you and me? Well, most likely that games and consoles will get better and at the same time, cheaper, as demand goes up, driving manufacturing costs down.

Probably the most interesting item to watch in the year 2000 will be how Microsoft decides to approach the launch of their first home console. Will they employ the help of Sega now that they've sworn off the hardware biz after Dreamcast? Seems like kind of a no-brainer, huh? Sega's support would give Microsoft's cold exterior some much-needed coolness. Then again, it might make more sense for Sega to produce games across all of the platforms. Can you imagine Shinobi on the PS2 or (gulp) Sonic on the same hardware as Mario?! Works for me.

From everyone here at Gamers' Republic, have a safe and very happy New Year. And make sure we're a part of that new-years resolution, okay? See you in 2000!



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GR

PRINTED IN CANADA

# GR VOL. 2, ISSUE # 8

## GAMERS' REPUBLIC

TRANSCONTINENTAL GAMING GUIDE ➔  
A MILLENNIUM PROJECT



### DRACONUS .30

Treyarch's finished dying by the sword— they live by the Dreamcast now. The world of Draconus spreads in all directions, populated by everything from weedy little pests to the hulking Mantis Queen. And Mr. Sulu! How can you go wrong with that?



### SUPERCROSS SPECIAL .82

Believe it or not, there are a lot of motocross games out there, their popularity constantly on the rise. We go all the way back to 1995's *Dirt Trax FX* on the Super Nintendo to see which ones are the best, which ones aren't bad, and which ones should have stayed out of the starting gates altogether.





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## MDK2 .18

Max, Doc, and Kurt. Seriously, that's what it's supposed to stand for. But let's leave naivete aside. There will be plenty of alien blood spilled (thanks to the Omen engine's slick particle system) before BioWare's tear down of the energy streams is over. This time out, M, D, and K will all get a chance to partake in the murder, death, and killing, each in their own inimitable way. We've gotten first crack at the playable version, as well as an interview with doctor-turned joint CEO and co-executive producer, Greg Zeschuk.



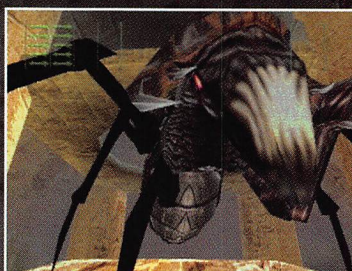
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[www.armorines.net](http://www.armorines.net)



# frontlines

## SNOW AND SKATE EXPO '99

The Snow and Skate Expo '99, which took place at the Long Beach Convention Center, became sanctuary for over 15,000 participants to watch a string of wicked amateur skate competitions, buy gear, and witness the all-time best skater, Tony Hawk, effortlessly bust some of the hardest tricks one will ever see.

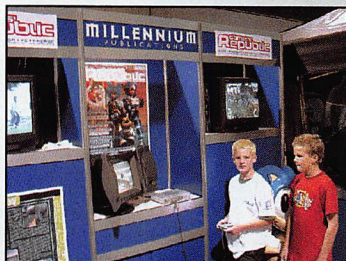
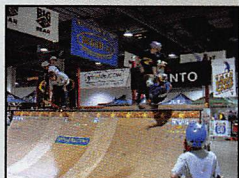
GR was front and center, hosting a booth, giving out free magazines and, with the help of Neversoft and Activision, holding skate competitions of our own by giving away Tony Hawk's Pro Skater for the PlayStation. We ran daily drawings, as well as a high-score contest that proved to be quite interesting.

All the gaming competitions were held in the GR booth, where the first heat started slow. Participants increasingly edged out others before them and about an hour into the contest, entrants were forced to shoot for lines, racking up over 100,000 points. A tall order, but to most it didn't matter; they just wanted a shot to play the game. At the end of the first competition, Evan Carter spanked the rest with an impressive score of 128,385. When asked how he got to be so good at the game and what he was going to do with his prize, Evan replied, "Something happened at school and I was sent home for a week. I already have the game, so I'm going to sell it on the floor so I can get these sick shoes."

The second heat hailed Chris Wolesslagle as the winner. His score of 65,700 was almost bumped on more than a few occasions, but point-hungry players kept bailing before ending their tricks, ultimately losing a consistent string of points. Out on the mini half-pipe, Tony Cervantes of Whittier, California, represented GR. One of the youngest skaters out there, Tony pushed and shoved for time to cradle the ramp. His favorite trick, a 540-fastplant, quickly earned him respect with the big boys.

Over in the far end of the convention center, during a fashion show, GR gave away subscriptions and magazines signed by Tony Hawk. Near the end of the day, Tony Hawk himself rolled by the booth to check out the game being played, signed some more magazines, and just chilled at the booth and talked.

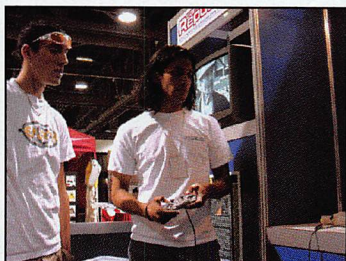
Right: Tony Hawk gets ready for another great run. Below: some of the sights around our booth and the hall.



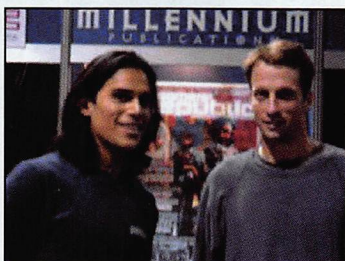
Future juvenile delinquents or editors-in-training? Only time will tell...



Tony Cervantes scopes the ramp in his favorite skatewear...the official GR T-shirt!



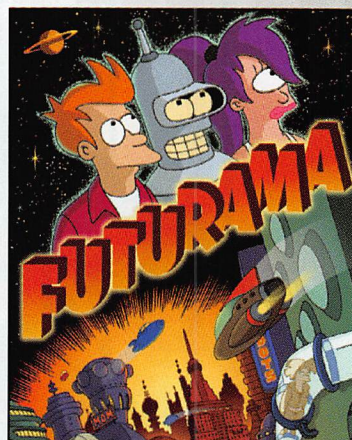
GR Sports editor Tom Stratton schoolin'...



...then turns to the master for sage advice.

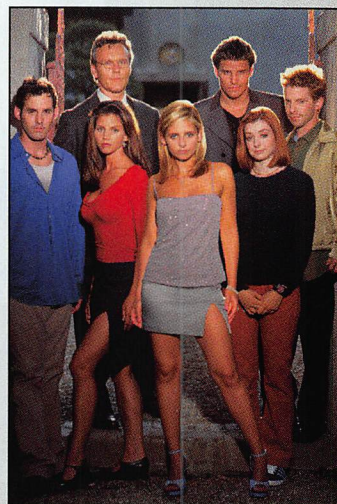
## MOORE SIMPSONS?

Moore Action Collectibles, makers of some of the finest action figures and collectibles on the planet, have finalized their negotiations with Twentieth Century Fox Licensing and Merchandising to produce a series of action figures based on *Simpson's* creator Matt Groening's *Futurama*. Moore plans on debuting the line at Toy Fair 2000, and then having them available shortly thereafter in the spring/summer of 2000. Stay tuned to GR for a peek at the prototypes as soon as they become available. For those of you not familiar with *Futurama*...crawl out from under that rock! *Futurama* takes place 1000 years in the future after Fry, a 25-year-old pizza delivery boy, accidentally freezes himself and wakes up to a bold new future. Fry, one-eyed ex-immigration cop Leela, and cantankerous automaton Bender will undoubtedly be part of the figure series (cross your fingers for pizza-box grip, kung-fu grip, and girder-bending grip, respectively), but we're also hoping to see members of the supporting cast show up as well. Dr. Zoidberg, anyone?



## YOU SLAY ME

In more Moore news, the company has also come to an agreement with Twentieth Century Fox Licensing and Merchandising to produce a second round of Buffy the Vampire Slayer action figures. The Series II action figures will include Buffy, Oz, Giles, Cordilla and Zander. Moore will debut the new figures at Toy Fair and launch them around the same time as *Futurama* (spring/summer 2000). Buffy wasn't available for comment, but promised that the characters "wouldn't suck" — at least not until nightfall.





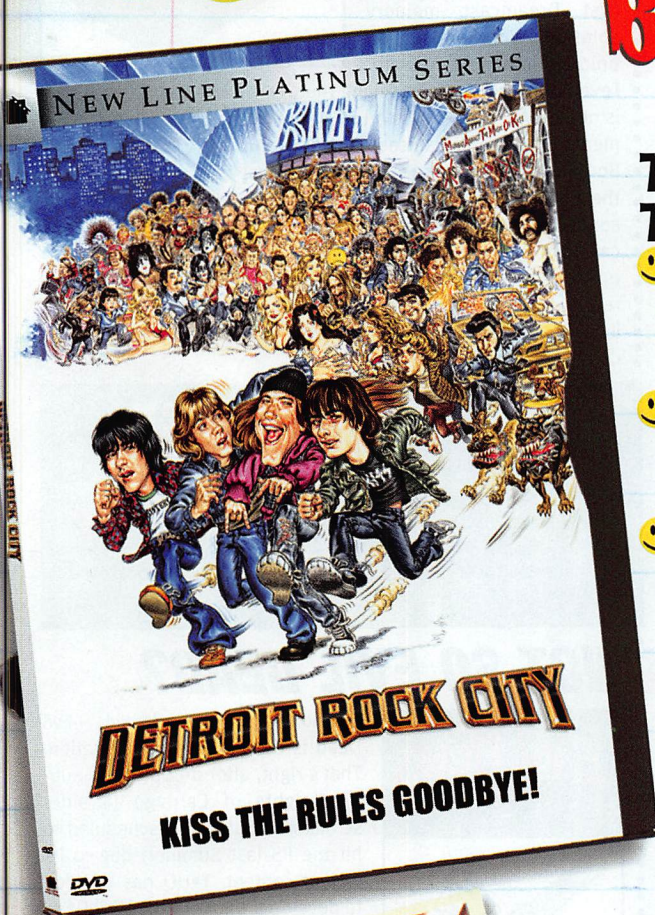


NEW LINE PLATINUM SERIES



# THIS DVD MAY ROCK. BUT IT'S BANNED BY M.A.T.M.O.R.

(MOTHERS AGAINST THE MUSIC OF KISS)

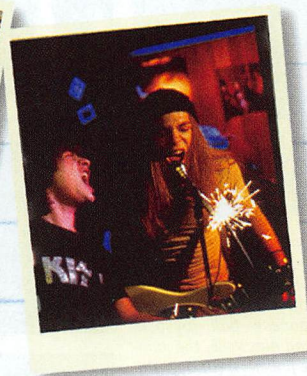
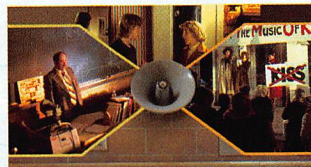


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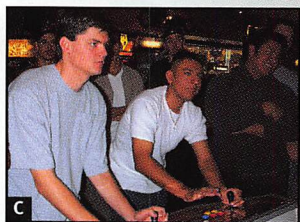


## TEKKEN TAG TOURNEY

Namco's worldwide Tekken Tag Tournament competition came to its conclusion on Sunday, November 7, as the top five players from the American tournament took on the two best Japanese fighters and the champion from Korea at Namco's Wonder Park in Milpitas, CA. There is a level of depth to Tekken that most people will never see, let alone master. The championships were proof of that; the world's best moved with skill and grace to place them on a completely different plane from your corner arcade button-mashers.

The best Californian players held their own against the Japanese. Surprisingly, Douzono Takeshi and Hayashida Katsuyuki, numbers one and two in Japan, didn't make it into the top three. That honor was reserved for Alex "Calipower" Valle, Mike "MIC" Nappi, and Seok Dong-min, the Korean champion, who amazed the crowd with his "Hwoarang Dance" technique, earning him the nickname "Crazy Legs" from the tournament MC. All eight world competitors went home with custom jackets, and the top three received trophies, but only Dong-min walked away with the grand prize: a complete Tekken Tag Tournament cabinet.

We'd like to congratulate Jason Arney and the rest of Namco's staff on organizing an excellent tournament. When they bring out their next ground-breaking fighter, we'll be there to see the world's finest play once more.



(A) The tournament setup, with two cabinets and one massive screen. (B) Hayashida Katsuyuki and Shafi Mohamed in the warm-ups. Note Hayashida's Japanese ball joystick. (C) Mike Nappi and Alex Valle, the number two and three finishers. (D) Hayashida and the world's champion, Seok "Crazy Legs" Dong-min. (E) The championship trophies, as well as the grand prize. (F) The Asian champions, Dong-min, Hayashida, and Douzono Takeshi. (G) All eight world competitors. (H) The world's champ, his trophy, and some luggage he won't be able to fit in an overhead compartment.



## GET A BETTER MEMORY!

From relatively new online company Level Six (they've been around for about a year and are known for their good customer service) comes the first Dreamcast memory solution. With a focus on unique import hardware, Level Six has just begun selling their 4X DC Memory Card (which is not a VMU, as there is no LCD screen) which has four times the memory of other Dreamcast memory cards and VMUs, containing 800 blocks of game save space! The best part, however, is that there is no compression, so these are very stable cards that can be connected to a computer to transfer game saves. This means you can either use your computer as an unlimited memory card or upload and download game saves on the Internet. Level Six currently has a good number of saves in their save area at [levelsix.com](http://levelsix.com), but look for that number to rise dramatically as their customer base grows.

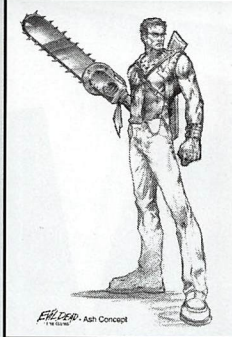


## BLAIR GLITCH PROJECT

In a move to exploit the inexplicable hit of the year, Gathering of Developers has acquired the rights to *The Blair Witch Project* from Artisan Entertainment and Haxan Films, and plans to publish multiple PC games based on the title, one of which will utilize Terminal Reality's Nocturne Engine. They will also publish at least one console game. How exciting. Whether they'll be made crudely in black and white remains to be seen.

## NOT SO EVIL DEAD?

**EVIL DEAD**  
ASHES 2 ASHES



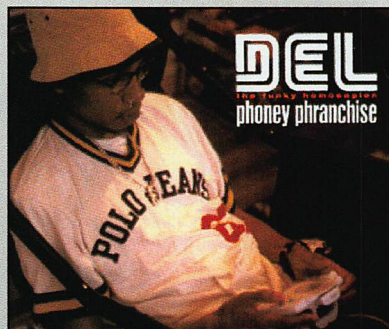
Hold on to your hands, kids – Evil Dead is coming to the PlayStation. That's right, after dropping the subtle Knights of Carnage (a side-scrolling hack 'n slash scheduled to hit the PS last Summer) due to its violent content, THQ has decided to develop a whole slew of Evil Dead games based on the cult-classic horror film. Groovy.

To produce the series of games, THQ has actually expanded their internal development and assembled a new team—Heavy Iron Studios—comprised of skilled programmers, designers and artists whose accolades include work on Square's Parasite Eve. The first game for

PlayStation and PC will be titled "Evil Dead: Ashes 2 Ashes." Bruce Campbell was quoted as saying, "An interactive adventure based on *Evil Dead* is long overdue. Today's game technology will give millions of fans their first chance to experience the sometimes horrific but often times humorous adventures of Ash and the Necronomicon." No doubt he's also thinking, Ka-ching! The game, which is being produced in cooperation with creators Sam Raimi and Robert Tapert and star Bruce Campbell, will be a one-player real-time 3D adventure with full-motion layered 2D backgrounds. Chainsaw arm and shotgun in tow, Ash's latest escapade takes place eight years after *Army of Darkness*. Returning to the infamous cabin in the woods, Ash will again do battle with the deadites, as well as explore new environments that serve to expand *Evil Dead's* existing history. So much for Rugrats, I guess.



## DOWN WIT' DEL, THE FUNKY HOMO-SAPIEN GAMER



On his new single, Phoney Phranchise, Del sports the Sega font for his name. The cover picture even has Del kickin' back playing a Dreamcast—our kind of guy. Though he has a love for Sega and their games he proved to us that he is an all-round gamer at heart. If the game is tight, he's going to play it. Heck, even if the game isn't all that, he takes the time to figure out what the programmers were trying to convey, a trait that definitely makes him a happy gamer.

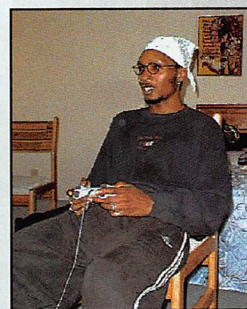
Upon arriving at his hotel room, Del had already got the day started and was currently playing King of Fighters '97 on his import Saturn. Always ready to play a hot Saturn game, we quickly took our place and jumped in. Since Del hasn't gotten an RF adapter for his Dreamcast yet, he brings his Saturn and Sega Nomad while on the road.

The day took us through a library of games and we ultimately relocated to a nearby haven where we could hook up a Dreamcast. We played games until he had to take off to perform in Hollywood, where we were invited to enjoy a tight show. As he does at many of his shows, Del paused

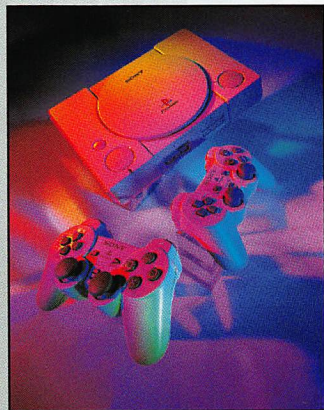
During his nationwide tour, we had the chance to catch up with Oakland rap artist, Del: the funky homosapien. Being long time fans of his style of rap and hip-hop, we jumped at the opportunity. The last time we saw him was at Sega's Launch Party for the Dreamcast, where we gave major shouts to Sega for having him perform.

for a moment to ask the audience what they thought about the Dreamcast by round of applause. The reception was mixed, but people obviously liked the system. Talking to Del later, he told us some crowds really dis the system—something he takes personally, though he understands reasons why some are jaded. What surprised us, though, was when he gave a shout out to *Gamers' Republic* during his show. How cool is that?

When the show was over, I bet you can guess what we did? Yep, went back to the pad to freak out on some more gaming nirvana that didn't end until well after the sun came out. The night sprouted into regular talks and even a second meeting with more in store. In fact, at completion of this article we were graced with a promo copy of his new album, *Both Sides of the Brain*—it is on hits. Look for a review next month and check out a more detailed listen of what was said that night on our website, [www.gamersrepublic.com](http://www.gamersrepublic.com), and more about Del at [www.funkyhomosapien.com](http://www.funkyhomosapien.com) and at [www.hieroglyphics.com](http://www.hieroglyphics.com).



## THE PRICE IS RIGHT!

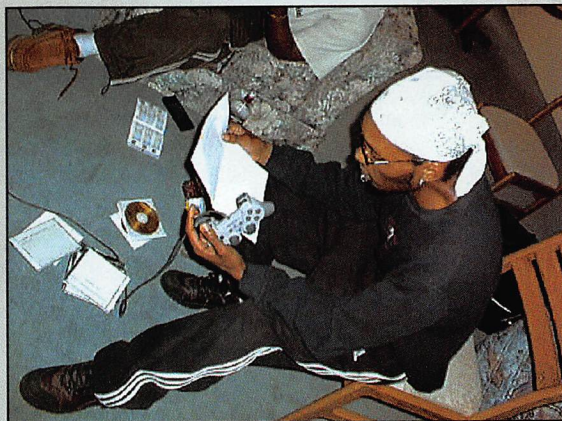


This holiday season, Sony Computer Entertainment America is projecting that PlayStation hardware, software and peripheral sales will reach a whopping \$1 billion. This projection is due in part to both a solid line-up of games—including *Dino Crisis*, *Resident Evil 3*, *Tomb Raider 4*, *Crash Team Racing*, *Spyro 2* and *Final Fantasy VIII*—as well as the sub-\$100 “impulse buy” price point for the PlayStation console. Since lowering the price of the unit August 16, 1999, the company has sold

more than one million units, bringing the total North American installed base of users to 21 million.

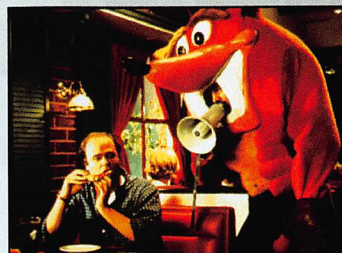
“In just four years, we have achieved phenomenal results by making the PlayStation system appealing to a broader audience than any system in history and our sales figures indicate that the demand for PlayStation continues to escalate,” said Kaz Hirai, president and chief operating officer, Sony Computer Entertainment America. “Our goal is to make the PlayStation family of products—hardware, software and peripherals—impulse purchases for consumers, and to offer access to video game entertainment for people of all ages.”

With the impending launch of PlayStation 2, this is, for all intents and purposes, the PlayStation's last big holiday season. To combat sales efforts from Sega and Nintendo, SCEA will be undertaking its most expansive marketing campaign ever, spending \$150 million.



## GET STUFFED...CRUST

Further proof that the gaming world has gone completely insane, on November 14 Sony Computer Entertainment America (SCEA to you and I) and Pizza Hut launched the largest interactive video game promotion to date. The holiday promotion will feature a five-million PlayStation-demo-disc giveaway and a sweepstakes with the chance to win a grand prize of \$500,000 with the purchase of a Pizza Hut Stuffed Crust Pizza. For the “Pizza Powered PlayStation Giveaway,” Sony will distribute



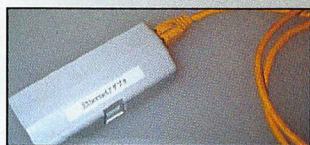
“Hey, pizza boy! Any idea what that huge puss filled growth is on the chefs chin?”

demo discs featuring 10 playable sample games including *Crash Team Racing*, *Tony Hawk Pro Skater*, *Cool Boarders 4*, *Ape Escape*, *Final Fantasy VIII*, *Gran Turismo 2*, and *Spyro 2: Ripto's Rage*. Better stock up on fat burners, people; it's pizza time.



## DC GETS HARD...WARE

On Wednesday, November 10, Sega held an industry conference where, among other accessories and projects related to the Dreamcast, they showed the spiffy new zip drive being prepped for release next year. Other items included a digital camera and cable modem upgrades, but neither got the solid confirmation for U.S., and murmurs continue about a possible DVD upgrade. At the end of the night, as people filed out, Sega representatives were waiting by the door handing each attendee a care package that included a Dreamcast system.



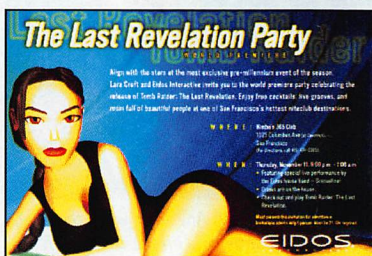
## TOP MOUSE

If you're going to play perfectly good games with a mouse, you may as well treat yourself to the coolest one on the planet: kárna's Razer Boomslang. This extraordinarily responsive mouse has been specially designed to improve PC gamers' performance and has a distinct sci-fi design happening that is just too cool. The Razer utilizes revolutionary focused light beam encoding technology that is capable of tracking movement far better and with greater precision than any conventional mouse, producing explosive gameplay. It's more responsive, offers smoother movement, and looks like an electric razor. It also comes packaged in a futuristic, shiny round tin! Believe us, this is the only way to go if you're in the market for the ultimate gaming mouse. You can find out more about the Razer at [www.razerzone.com](http://www.razerzone.com).



## BAR RAIDERS

On November 11 at Bimbo's 365 in San Francisco, Eidos held a swanky party in celebration of the fourth Tomb Raider for the PlayStation. Many showed up in hopes that the model who poses as Lara would be at the party, but their pipe dreams were quickly spent, for she was not there. To us it didn't matter, 'cause when we stepped into the club and saw Soul Reaver for the Dreamcast from across the room, everything else became blurry. All the props in the world to Eidos and their efforts with Tomb Raider 4—level design looks to be at an all-time high—but having Soul Reaver over in the corner definitely took the focus off of Lara and her sporty new pigtails. Fear Effect (formerly known as Fear Factor) was also on hand earlier in the evening and seems to be coming along fine, though it slipped from its original holiday release, to late January or early February. After a long session with the different games, we relaxed with a few stiff drinks and chatted with our industry friends.



## OR IS SEGA ALL SOFT?

At a Sega press conference designed to launch the Dreamcast Zip Drive and show off the new DC digital camera, Sega Enterprises chairman Isao Okawa made the real news when he implied that Sega is getting out of the hardware business after Dreamcast. Long speculated but vehemently denied by Sega, Okawa's comments quickly spread over the Internet, as Sega nay-sayers began the "I told you so" rants. The idea of Sega becoming just a software provider has been rumored ever since the Saturn was seen as a failure in America, but this is the first corporate admission of such an intention.

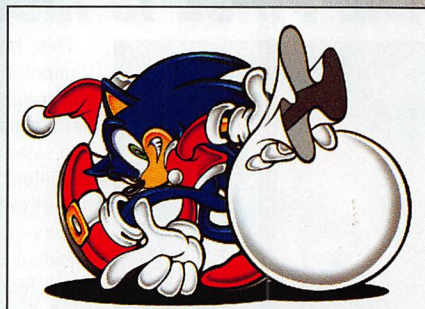
Predictably, Sega of America is painting a different picture, and practically guaranteed that a new piece of Sega hardware is indeed coming at some point in the future. However, SoA did not specifically say that a new platform was coming, and could have instead been referring to the rumored DVD upgrade for the Dreamcast.

If Okawa's comments prove out, one wonders just what platforms Sega will support. To develop for a Nintendo or Sony console seems hard to believe, as this would be an incredible blow to Sega's pride. One possibility sees Sega becoming a software provider for Microsoft's so-called X-Box. This would allow them to stay off of their arch-rival's hardware and give Microsoft some much needed legitimacy with console gamers to augment what will presumably be a heavily PC-oriented developer list. This is all blatant speculation at this point, but it seems within the realm of possibility.

## SONIC IN 2000: S2K?

We loved Sega's idea of bringing a little Christmas cheer into the already delightful NIGHTS, but will it work the same magic for Sonic? Find out by downloading time-released Christmas themes for your Dreamcast, as well as a touch of Halloween, to liven up Sonic Adventure (not that it needs it). Use your modem-equipped DC to grab these goodies and go!

Maybe this will be enough to keep your Sonic hunger satiated till the sequel. That's right: Word from Sega is that another Sonic is coming to Dreamcast, possibly as soon as early 2000.



## JUICY DC TIDBITS

- Soul Reaver's migration to Dreamcast started as a provocative rumor, and has now been proven fact. Does this mean that the current rumors of Eidos' amazingly promising PC titles Anachronox and Omikron are also on the way to Dreamcast? That's what we hear...

- Shipping on December 23, Kenji Eno's dark cinematic adventure D2 will ship in three special edition packages. No matter what the success of the game, Eno says this is the last time Laura will appear in a Warp title...

- Bad news for Resident Evil fans: the hi-res version of RE2, complete with a demo of Code: Veronica, is going to take a while to make it to the States, arriving no earlier than April 2000...

- Now that we're talking Capcom, it looks like the Spawn arcade game will support a VMU option. Hopefully this means the Dreamcast version will be out sooner than later to take advantage of the compatibility...

- It was a success for Crash Bandicoot, maybe it'll work for others. Sega of Japan is transplanting Ready 2 Rumble and NFL 2K into Japanese Dreamcasts early next year.



## GO GO POKÉMON!

A new and color screen version of Nintendo's Pocket Pikachu—called Pokémon Pikachu in the U.S.—was released in Japan on November 21 for under \$30.00. Although the original black and white unit was highly successful in Japan, the virtual pet had only moderate sales stateside due to the fact that it was released before NOA's Pokémon marketing juggernaut. Japan's Pocket Pikachu Color is the first virtual pet with a color screen ever released, and with no sign of the new color-screen Pokémon Pikachu on NOA's website, we're unsure of a stateside release. Although its release is probably being planned as you read this, one possible reason for the low profile is because of Pokémon's current legal hassles involving the card game's purported promotion of illegal gambling (as reported in GR last month). The link here is that just as the first unit included a slot machine mini-game, the new unit includes a card-based mini-game.



Needless to say, Nintendo and Pokémon are doing just fine. From its release on October 18 through October 31, 1999, Pokémon Yellow sold more than 1 million cartridges, making it the fastest-selling Nintendo title of all time, beating out The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time. As a matter of fact, from October 17 through October 23, according to a national video game tracking service, the top five industry titles sold were all Pokémon: Yellow, Pinball, Red, Blue, and Snap.

"The sales numbers we're seeing within the first 14 days for Pokémon Yellow Version: Special Pikachu Edition seem to confirm the impossible—Pokémon is actually getting more popular," says Peter Main, executive vice president, sales and marketing. "In marketing

terms, we may be watching a textbook definition of synergy. The video games, trading cards and toys, along with anticipation for the upcoming movie, all are fueling what's now a major entertainment franchise."



On November 6, *Pokémon: The First Movie* had its premiere at Hollywood's Mann's Chinese Theatre, and the crowd was so huge that Hollywood Blvd. was closed off. Rabid Pokémon fans looking to get tickets through a contest jammed and summarily closed down the phone lines at Warner Bros. studios, as the call count reached 70,000 a minute. Although universally panned by critics, the film, released nationwide on Wednesday, November 10, earned \$10 million on 2,901 screens, making it the best Wednesday release in any November. As we go to press, the movie is set to break the five-day non-summer record of \$45.7 million set last year by *A Bug's Life*. The Pokémania is not only paying off for Nintendo, but for Warner Bros. as well, as the company paid a mere \$5 million for the pic, plus fees for dubbing and a soundtrack featuring artists such as Britney Spears and 'N Sync.

Finally, Burger King is experiencing a Pokémon frenzy of its own with its current promotion. Running from November 8 through December 31, 1999, at 8,000 BK restaurants, kids can get exclusive Pokémon toys with the purchase of any size Kid's Meal. Here in Southern California, BK experienced a PR problem, making the evening news programs, as many of the restaurants ran out of the toys, causing the tots to go ballistic.



## GUNDAMMIT, JIM, WHERE ARE THE WOMEN?

Good news, bad news. Good news: New Mobile War Chronicle Gundam Wing, by far the most popular of recent Gundam anime, will be shown on the Cartoon Network beginning next spring. Bad news: the yaoi doujinshi phenomenon is just waiting to cross the Pacific, I can feel it.

Those who know, know. Those who don't know, don't even ask. NMWCGW, usually just called "Gundam Wing," "Bishonen Gun-

dam," or "that show with the damn pansies who never lose," ran for four seasons on Japanese TV, gathering a massive following in its home country and a cult of die-hard fans in the U.S. Though called Gundam, like G Gundam it is completely separate from the main Universal Century continuity (MS Gundam, 0080, 0083, Z, ZZ, Char's Counterattack). It tells a familiar story of war between Earth and Lagrange-point space colonies, but the colonists are now the ostensible protagonists, and anyway, the real attractions are the insane angst overload, the slick modern animation, the neatly designed mechs, and the five improbably handsome teenage guys who drive them.

This continues Bandai's effort to bring Gundam to the States in full force. The broadcast of the Wing series will coincide with the gradually expanding release of the Wing model kits, and of course, the direct-to-video sale of the rest of the Gundam canon moves forward apace.

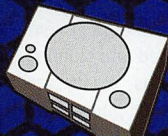






MONTHLY CHARTS PROVIDED BY  
NPD DATA TRACKING SERVICES

# database



## top ten selling playstation titles

\*RANKED ON UNITS SOLD OCTOBER 1999

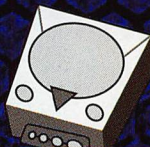


- |                        |                |                      |           |
|------------------------|----------------|----------------------|-----------|
| 1. DRIVER              | GT INTERACTIVE | 6. DINO CRISIS       | CAPCOM    |
| 2. FINAL FANTASY VIII  | SQUARE EA      | 7. GRAN TURISMO      | SONY      |
| 3. T HAWK'S PRO SKATER | ACTIVISION     | 8. FF ANTHOLOGY      | SQUARE EA |
| 4. MADDEN NFL 2000     | EA             | 9. WCW MAYHEM        | EA        |
| 5. NASCAR 2000         | EA             | 10. SPYRO THE DRAGON | SONY      |

## top ten selling nintendos64 titles

\*RANKED ON UNITS SOLD OCTOBER 1999

- |                             |          |                     |          |
|-----------------------------|----------|---------------------|----------|
| 1. POKÉMON SNAP             | NINTENDO | 6. SUPER SMASH BROS | NINTENDO |
| 2. ARMY MEN: Sarge's Heroes | 3DO      | 7. MADDEN NFL 2000  | EA       |
| 3. JET FORCE GEMINI         | NINTENDO | 8. ZELDA: OoT       | NINTENDO |
| 4. WCW MAYHEM               | EA       | 9. NFL BLITZ 2000   | MIDWAY   |
| 5. GAUNTLET LEGENDS         | MIDWAY   | 10. GOLDENEYE 007   | NINTENDO |



## top ten selling dreamcast titles

\*RANKED ON UNITS SOLD OCTOBER 1999



- |                     |        |                        |            |
|---------------------|--------|------------------------|------------|
| 1. NFL 2K           | SEGA   | 6. SEGA BASS FISHING   | SEGA       |
| 2. SONIC ADVENTURE  | SEGA   | 7. HOUSE OF THE DEAD 2 | SEGA       |
| 3. READY 2 RUMBLE   | MIDWAY | 8. NFL BLITZ 2000      | MIDWAY     |
| 4. SOUL CALIBUR     | NAMCO  | 9. TOYKO XTREME RACER  | CRAVE      |
| 5. MARVEL VS CAPCOM | CAPCOM | 10. BLUE STINGER       | ACTIVISION |

## top ten selling pc titles

\*RANKED ON UNITS SOLD SEPTEMBER 1999

- |                          |           |                      |           |
|--------------------------|-----------|----------------------|-----------|
| 1. C&C: Tiberian Sun     | WESTWOOD  | 6. AGE OF EMPIRES 2  | MICROSOFT |
| 2. MADDEN NFL 2000       | EA        | 7. HALF-LIFE         | SIERRA    |
| 3. RAINBOW 6: Spear      | RED STORM | 8. BIG GAME HUNTER 2 | HEADGAMES |
| 4. RAINBOW 6: Gold       | RED STORM | 9. SIMCITY 3000      | MAXIS     |
| 5. ROLLER COASTER TYCOON | HASBRO    | 10. NEED FOR SPEED 3 | EA        |



## top ten overall console

\*RANKED ON UNITS SOLD OCTOBER 1999

- |                        |          |                           |                |
|------------------------|----------|---------------------------|----------------|
| 1. POKÉMON YELLOW-GBC  | NINTENDO | 6. DRIVER-PS              | GT INTERACTIVE |
| 2. POKÉMON RED-GBC     | NINTENDO | 7. FINAL FANTASY VIII-PS  | SQUARE EA      |
| 3. POKÉMON BLUE-GBC    | NINTENDO | 8. T HAWK'S PRO SKATER-PS | ACTIVISION     |
| 4. POKÉMON PINBALL-GBC | NINTENDO | 9. MADDEN NFL 2000-PS     | EA             |
| 5. POKÉMON SNAP-N64    | NINTENDO | 10. NASCAR 2000-PS        | EA             |



# world republic top ten games



## japan

- |                          |     |                          |    |
|--------------------------|-----|--------------------------|----|
| 1. ARC THE LAD III       | PS  | 7. PROFESSIONAL BASEBALL |    |
| 2. SUPER ROBOT TAISEN 64 | N64 | DUGOUT '99               | PS |
| 3. REVIVE: Revival       | DC  | 8. JOJO'S BIZARRE ADV.   | PS |
| 4. DRAGON QUEST 1 & 2    | GB  | 9. DANCE DANCE REV.      |    |
| 5. DERBY STALLION '99    | PS  | 2nd Remix                | PS |
| 6. WORLD SOCCER JikkYOU  |     | 10. MONSTER COLLECTION   | PS |
| Winning Eleven 4         | PS  |                          |    |
- \* FROM OCT 25 ~ OCT 31 1999

## united kingdom

- |                          |       |                 |          |
|--------------------------|-------|-----------------|----------|
| 1. FINAL FANTASY VIII    | PS    | 6. LMA MANAGER  | PS       |
| 2. AGE OF EMPIRES II     | PC    | 7. DINO CRISIS  | PS       |
| 3. FORMULA 1 '99         | PS    | 8. POKÉMON RED  | GB       |
| 4. SW EP 1: Phan. Menace | PS/PC | 9. POKÉMON BLUE | GB       |
| 5. GRAND THEFT AUTO 2    | PC/PS | 10. TARZAN      | PC/PS/GB |
- \*WEEK OF 10/30/99

# gamers' republic top ten games

\* BASED ON GAMES PLAYED THROUGH NOVEMBER 15, 1999



d. halverson



- |                     |     |
|---------------------|-----|
| 1. JET FORCE GEMINI | N64 |
| 2. DONKEY KONG 64   | N64 |
| 3. MDK 2            | DC  |
| 4. RAYMAN 2         | N64 |
| 5. TOMBA! 2         | PS  |
| 6. KNUCKLES CHAOTIX | 32X |
| 7. EARTHWORM JIM 3D | N64 |
| 8. SOUL FIGHTER     | DC  |
| 9. LANGRISSE MILL.  | DC  |
| 10. BANGAIO         | DC  |



b. siechter



- |                     |         |
|---------------------|---------|
| 1. MDK 2            | DC      |
| 2. SaGa FRONTIER 2  | PS      |
| 3. BANGAIO          | DC      |
| 4. JET FORCE GEMINI | N64     |
| 5. SHADOW MAN       | DC      |
| 6. PONG             | PS      |
| 7. CHRONO TRIGGER   | PS      |
| 8. BATMAN RETURNS   | SEGA CD |
| 9. TOMB RAIDER: LR  | PS      |
| 10. RE-VOLT         | DC      |



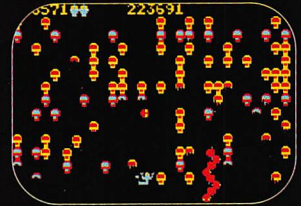
m. inobbs



- |                    |    |
|--------------------|----|
| 1. BANGAIO         | DC |
| 2. SEGA RALLY 2    | DC |
| 3. CHU CHU ROCKET  | DC |
| 4. FORMULA ONE '99 | PS |
| 5. GIGAWING        | DC |
| 6. RE-VOLT         | DC |
| 7. SILENT BOMBER   | PS |
| 8. EVOLUTION       | DC |
| 9. MDK 2           | DC |
| 10. PONG           | PS |



t. stratton



- |                           |        |
|---------------------------|--------|
| 1. CENTIPEDE              | ARCADE |
| 2. NBA 2K                 | DC     |
| 3. NFL 2K                 | DC     |
| 4. T HAWK'S PRO SKATER    | PS     |
| 5. GUARDIAN WAR           | 3DO    |
| 6. BANGAIO                | DC     |
| 7. GUNBARE NIPPON CH.     | PS     |
| 8. WU-TANG: Shaolin Style | PS     |
| 9. X-FILES                | PS     |
| 10. GRAN TURISMO          | PS     |



pooch



- |                          |        |
|--------------------------|--------|
| 1. JET FORCE GEMINI      | N64    |
| 2. T HAWK'S PRO SKATER   | PS     |
| 3. PONG                  | PS     |
| 4. Q*BERT                | PS     |
| 5. ROCKET                | N64    |
| 6. MARIO GOLF            | N64    |
| 7. CRAZY TAXI            | ARCADE |
| 8. GOLDENEYE 007         | N64    |
| 9. LoZ: Link's Awakening | GB     |
| 10. DONKEY KONG CLASSIC  | GB     |



e. sear



- |                        |            |
|------------------------|------------|
| 1. CASTLEVANIA: SotN   | PS         |
| 2. POKÉMON YELLOW      | GBC        |
| 3. LEGACY OF KAIN: SR  | PS         |
| 4. CRASH TEAM RACING   | PS         |
| 5. POKÉMON BLUE        | GBC        |
| 6. T HAWK'S PRO SKATER | PS         |
| 7. GRAN TURISMO        | PS         |
| 8. DONKEY KONG 64      | N64        |
| 9. TEST DRIVE 6        | GBC        |
| 10. T WOODS PGA        | PALM/PILOT |



j. r. haugen



- |                         |           |
|-------------------------|-----------|
| 1. HIPHOPPA Deluxe MC   | import PS |
| 2. HYPE: the Time Quest | PC        |
| 3. PONG                 | PS        |
| 4. MISCHIEF MAKERS      | N64       |
| 5. RAYMAN 2             | N64       |
| 6. MDK 2                | DC        |
| 7. SHADOW MAN           | DC        |
| 8. SPYRO: Ripto's Rage  | PS        |
| 9. FF VIII              | DC        |
| 10. CHU CHU ROCKET      | DC        |



d. smith



- |                        |        |
|------------------------|--------|
| 1. GIGAWING            | DC     |
| 2. SEGA RALLY 2        | ARCADE |
| 3. BANGAIO             | DC     |
| 4. QUAKE 3             | PC     |
| 5. T HAWK'S PRO SKATER | PS     |
| 6. GRANDIA             | PS     |
| 7. SaGa FRONTIER 2     | PS     |
| 8. DANCE DANCE REV 2   | rmPS   |
| 9. TOP SKATER          | ARCADE |
| 10. XTANKS             | UNIX   |





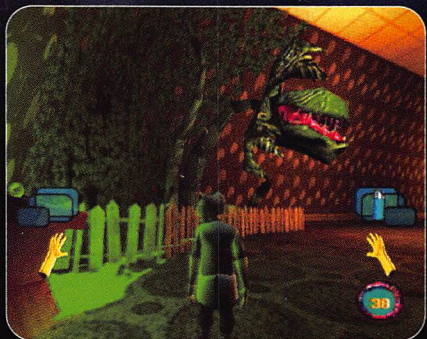
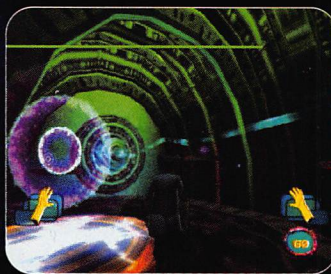
# MDK2

MURDER DEATH KILL

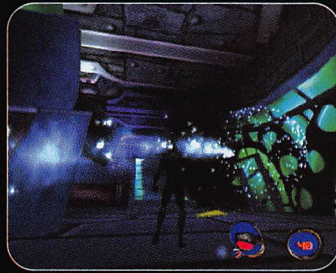
**W**ith formidable critical praise and commercial success to its credit, the PC and PlayStation action extravaganza MDK was bound to continue its strong ideas in a sequel. Given that the original design team migrated to create Giants, it's taken a while for the next MDK to come together. But now, charged by the talents of Canadian developer BioWare, MDK2 is an impressive reality, poised to inject a much-needed adrenaline shot of action-adventure into the Dreamcast early next year.

The lone hero in the first game, the shadowy Kurt Hectic returns to MDK2 to thwart the belligerent alien race ruled by Emperor Zizzy Bulooba. Joining Kurt in his plight are two new characters—the robotic, four-armed dog, Max, and the eccentric genius, Dr. Hawkins. Each character brings a unique set of challenges and elements to the gameplay as they move through their three individual areas. Once the game's tenth and final area is reached, you can choose to place into battle whichever character you want, changing the complexion of the level and final boss confrontation.

The action in MDK2 takes place primarily on a futuristic Earth, an orbiting space ship, and in an alternate dimension. The distant world imagined is one of the most unique places I've ever seen in this type of game, with elements of a comic-book past combined with visions of a future that is dim and shadowy, cast in deep purples, blues and golds. Its vast corridors and towering structures







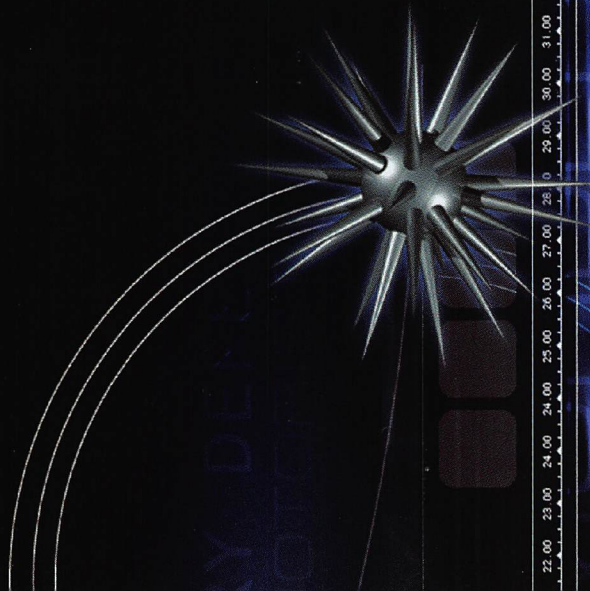
extend into the stars, surrounded by all kinds of leaky, churning anachronistic technology.

When Kurt enters this world, he can use his Ribbon Parachute to float across enormous distances and rise on pockets of air; it's an awesome play mechanic, fusing involving platforming strategies to his missions. Like in the first game, Kurt faces enemies with the offensive power of a chain gun, or he can deploy such weapons as The Portable Black Hole and The Smallest Nuclear Bomb. For precision and stealth attacks, an invaluable sniping mode allows for zooming up to tremendous distances: homing shots can be sent around corners, explosives guided into distant structures, puzzles solved.

Kurt's missions are full of action, but the cigar-smoking Max, with his ability to equip four flesh-disintegrating weapons at a time, is the game's source for the most intense, wanton destruction. Max's sole priority is to go into a room, lock on as many aliens as possible, and rip them apart—which, it should be noted, leaves trails of some very cool, bouncing particle effects. When it's safe to proceed, Max can use a jet pack to get to higher areas in the level.

Every character in MDK2 will be faced with obstacles that require some level of puzzle solving, but it is Dr. Hawkins who is the true brains of the game, relying on gadgets and cunning to face his foes. One of the more inventive moments I've seen in MDK2 so far is when the doctor straps on an industrial-strength leaf blower and forces a pack of huge aliens into a corner occupied by a mutated plant, which quickly finds itself with ample

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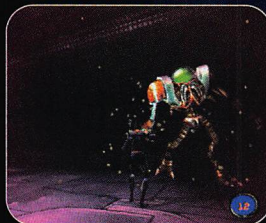
## KURT HECTIC HERO

Kurt is the son of a decorated war hero. Not one to follow in his father's esteemed footsteps, he spent years stuck in empty jobs and meaningless endeavors before his father pulled some strings with the military, landing him a job as a janitor on an R.A.F. base near New York. Sticking to himself and always lost in his work, Kurt continued a mundane existence until the day his life would change forever—the day the ship he was cleaning, the Jim Dandy, was accidentally launched into space. He would soon learn that deep inside him was a man he never knew, and Kurt, hero, was born.

Kurt feeds off fear, but now that he is forced to face an evil alien empire, he must rely on more than his strength, stealth and quickness to survive. Dr. Hawkins has designed the personalized Coil Suit to shield him from enemy fire and enable him to survive in a vacuum. Along with its compartments that hold an array of atomic-strength weapons, the suit allows him to tem-

porarily cloak to sneak past an enemy. An extension of the suit's design is the Ribbon Parachute, which allows Kurt to glide through his world for long periods of time, or rise to enormous heights by catching currents of air.

A chain gun is Kurt's primary offense, but there will be many times when he is forced to deploy his Sniper Helmet. This invaluable device is so sensitive, it can zoom almost indefinitely to target an enemy, sending explosives into buildings or bullets around corners and bouncing off walls.



## MAX MAN'S BEST FRIEND

Dr. Fluke has attempted the creation of artificial life on a number of occasions, but he's often failed. Undaunted by his failures, Dr. Fluke finally succeeded by creating Max, a bipedal robotic canine with two legs and four arms. Despite his somewhat mutated appearance, his body is nearly a flawless representation of an actual canine's physiological structure, yet he is exceptional in his abilities, able to perform under extreme conditions when necessary.

Because of his mechanical enhancements, Max is able to withstand excessive damage and atmospheric changes that would normally debilitate Dr. Fluke or Kurt, and his titanium skeleton and

hydraulic musculature enables him to handle objects that are three times his mass. Perhaps his greatest strength is his ability to hold and fire up to four weapons at a time, clearing masses of alien scum in a matter of seconds. Aided by an onboard targeting computer, Max can track as many as 20 enemies at a time, auto-targeting the nearest threat.

Young and somewhat inexperienced, Max is known to work himself to exhaustion in his eagerness to please his master. His insistence on changing his name from Bones to Max early in his life-cycle shows an uncanny sense of self-awareness, and with the knowledge of more than a hundred theologians, philosophers and physicist, this exceptional dog demonstrates remarkable intelligence.

With little expression and a burning cigar always dangling from his mouth, Max exhibits a cold-as-steel demeanor when faced with his ultimate mission: move into a room and make sure nothing escapes alive.



## DOCTOR FLUKE HAWKINS GENIUS

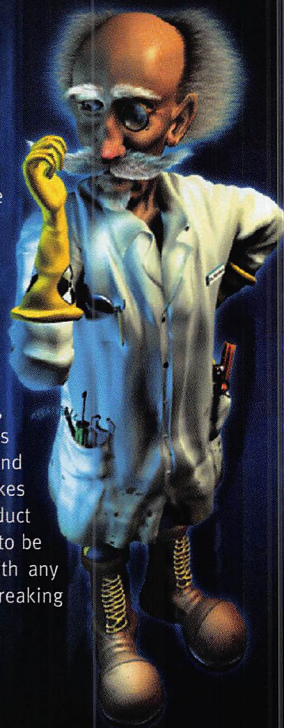
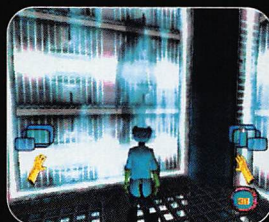
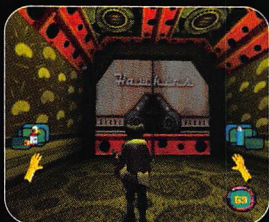
The eccentric genius Dr. Hawkins lives for invention. To him, nothing is junk. His ability to combine nearly anything together yields abstract and sometimes crude weapons, such as an atomic toaster gun and molotov cocktail. Sometimes he takes his experimenting a bit too far, and the results are explosive. Push him far enough, and he'll not think twice about throwing his body into his science, ingesting chemical concoctions, not worrying about the possible side effects.

Dr. Hawkins' intense mind began to wander outside the normal

boundaries of science when he began his studies in the '50s. After discovering immense waves of energy called Flange orbits, the doctor decided that the next step in his genius would be to create the largest spacecraft known to man. As always, he took his vision a bit too far, stranding himself in the depths of space, leaving everything in his past behind.

Now that he has joined Kurt and Max in the fight to save the Earth, he must put his invention to good use,

fashioning crude objects to cross chasms, and weapons out of the likes of a hand dryer and duct tape. He's not known to be aggressive, but, as with any man, he has his breaking point.







## AN INTERVIEW WITH **GREG ZESCHUK** CO-EXECUTIVE PRODUCER **MDK2**

**GR: WHY WAS BIOWARE TAPPED TO DO THE MDK2 PROJECT? WAS IT YOUR IDEA, SHINY'S, INTERPLAY'S, OR A LITTLE OF EACH?**

GZ: I would say that BioWare's selection to do the MDK2 project was a combination of good timing, and the ability to get the job done. Interplay was looking for someone to do the sequel to MDK2, but, at the time, Shiny didn't have any development slots open. We were working on a new 3D engine at BioWare that would be suitable for MDK2, and Interplay was aware of this, as we were working quite closely on Baldur's Gate. We had an open development slot, they offered the chance to do the sequel to a game we really enjoyed, and the rest was history. Looking back, I can say that we were very fortunate to get the opportunity to work on MDK2.

**GR: AFTER STRIKING GOLD WITH AN RPG, BALDUR'S GATE, WAS IT DIFFICULT TO SHIFT GEARS AND GO BACK TO CREATING AN ACTION GAME? DID THE EXPERIENCE OF WORKING ON BALDUR'S GATE AFFECT HOW YOU APPROACHED MDK2, INFLUENCING ELEMENTS LIKE EXPLORATION OR PUZZLE DESIGN?**

GZ: As we had two separate development teams at BioWare when we started working on Baldur's Gate in early 1996, we didn't have to change gears or direction when it came to creating MDK2. Our first game was the big mech action game, Shattered Steel, and following its release we were working on developing a new 3D engine for another action game while a completely different team was pounding away on Baldur's Gate. Since BG's release, a few of the members of the Baldur's Gate team have joined MDK2 to help in the fun. The experience of working on Baldur's Gate helped us most with understanding what has to be done to make a quality game. Even though MDK2 is a drastically different game from Baldur's Gate, with very disparate design approaches, the fundamental processes we learned while making Baldur's Gate apply any project. During the later part of BG we learned the importance of releasing a game only when it is finished and adequately tested; we're applying this to MDK2.

**GR: MDK2 EMBODIES SUCH A RICH, UNIQUE VISUAL STYLE. I LOVE THE LEVEL WHERE THE VAST ARRAY OF SHIPS ARE FLYING OVERHEAD, AND IT'S ESPECIALLY INTRIGUING HOW YOU BLENDED A SPACE BACKDROP AGAINST A COZY KITCHEN AND BURNING FIREPLACE IN KURT'S LEVEL. ANY PARTICULAR INSPIRATIONS BEHIND ALL THIS?**

GZ: Our main inspiration in creating MDK2's environments was the original MDK. And, I have to say, we have some really amazing artists and programmers working on MDK2. Their vision has allowed the game to reach new levels of realism, complexity and wackiness. Almost every day, someone comes up with something new and incredible, and extends MDK2 just a little bit further. We give the people working on MDK2 a lot of responsibility to take their work as far as they can. Our goal is to build an environment at BioWare in which everyone can create something amazing.

**GR: WHAT LED YOU TO USE THE VIVID COLOR SCHEME OF DEEP PURPLES AND BLUES? IT'S A VERY DARK, SHADOWY UNIVERSE, BUT IT'S NOT YOUR TYPICAL GRITTY SCI-FI LOOK.**

GZ: Color choice in the game was dictated by not only how the environments looked with the vivid colors, but also by how the characters looked in the environments. The artists were also encouraged to use color freely throughout the game. I remember that one of my early statements about MDK2 was, "No grays are allowed."

**GR: WHO CAME UP WITH THE CHARACTER DESIGNS? WHAT PROMPTED YOU TO ADD THE TWO NEW CHARACTERS INSTEAD OF JUST STICKING WITH KURT?**

GZ: When designing a character we first come up with a design based on the gameplay mechanics we want it to follow. Next, the character is sequentially conceived, modeled, textured, animated and finally scripted. We use an assembly line process at BioWare: different people model, texture—the same guy who draws the original concept also textures the characters—animate and script the characters. This way each person specializes in one aspect of the character, taking it to its maximal potential. When considering what we were going to do with MDK2 to try to make it better than the original, we ran into a significant stumbling block. We thought the original MDK was really good, and we didn't want to significantly change anything about the game. We also didn't want to completely follow in the steps of the original.

One day we were discussing our plight when someone said, "Why don't we just allow the player to use Max, and the Doctor as well as Kurt?"

After this little epiphany we ran off and started work on the real MDK2. We found our competitive advantage and it made creating MDK2 much easier.

**GR: HOW DO EACH OF THE THREE CHARACTERS AFFECT GAMEPLAY? ARE YOU GOING FOR HUGE DIVERSITY BETWEEN THEM?**

GZ: I would say that there is considerable diversity between the three characters. At its very foundation, MDK2 is first an action game, so all characters have a significant amount of action as part of their gameplay. But each character also has a fundamental difference that makes his gameplay completely different than the others.

For example, Kurt is a stealthy, action oriented character with a sniper scope, parachute and chain gun. His gameplay is much more covert than Max, who can wield four different weapons at the same time and runs around destroying his environment with reckless abandon. Meanwhile, the Doctor is unlike any other character I can think of: some of his puzzles involve not directly damaging enemies to defeat them, and others involve invoking his special MacGyver-like ability to make dangerous objects out of everyday items. The final result is that each of

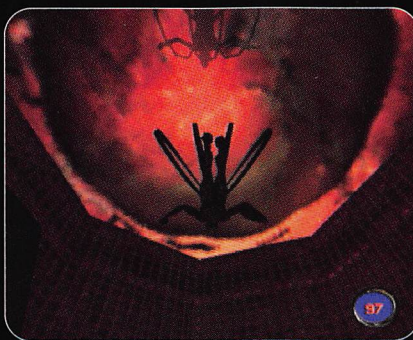
the three characters plays very differently.

**GR: ARE YOU INTRODUCING A LOT OF NEW ENEMIES INTO MDK2?**

GZ: There will be about 20 enemies in MDK2. This doesn't include the bosses that appear at the end of each level. The enemies are quite varied in their attacks and behaviors. In fact, some aliens aren't even really combatants, and instead they are present for comic relief, as in the first game. It's quite important that we have funny and dangerous characters to confuse the player.

**GR: WAS THERE A PARTICULAR INSPIRATION FOR THE ARTISTIC STYLE OF KURT'S LEVELS? MAX'S REMIND ME OF H. R. GIGER'S ARTWORK, AND THE DOCTOR'S OBVIOUSLY OWE A LOT TO '50S AND '60S INTERIOR DESIGN, BUT I CAN'T QUITE CONNECT KURT'S WITH ANYTHING ELSE.**

GZ: There's also a lot of Giger in some of Kurt's levels. There's probably a bit of Blade Runner, as well as anime styling throughout the game. In the case of the Imperial City levels, we really wanted to give the player a sense of scale. In the Jim Dandy, we wanted the player to feel like he or she was taking a trip back in some sort of retro spaceship. Each location is designed to be completely unique; we want the player to marvel at the environments in addition to having a great time playing the game.







**GR: IS MAX GOING TO KEEP HIS CIGAR IN THE FINAL VERSION OF THE GAME? I THINK IT ADDS AN AWFUL LOT TO THE CHARACTER, BUT THAT SORT OF THING IS FREQUENTLY TABOO IN CONSOLE GAMES. WILL IT BE A PROBLEM WITH INTERPLAY OR SEGA?**

GZ: We hope [to keep the cigar]. Thus far it sounds like he's still going to have it. We are likely heading for a Teen rating, so I think the cigar can probably be kept. You are correct in noting that we have to get approval from Sega and Interplay for things like the cigar.

**GR: HAVING GOTTEN TO PLAY THE PREVIEW VERSION, I'M A BIG FAN OF THE DOCTOR'S PLAY MECHANICS. DO YOU HAVE A FIGURE ON THE NUMBER OF DIFFERENT ITEM COMBINATIONS HE CAN DEVELOP? RELATED TO THAT, WILL THERE BE MULTIPLE SOLUTIONS TO HIS PUZZLES DEPENDING ON WHAT YOU WANT TO INVENT?**

GZ: The difficult part about answering this question is that we keep coming up with new stuff for the doctor. Occasionally, we also dump older items, but generally it seems that we keep adding cool things for him to do. He has at least 20 items at this point. I'd say that five of them are independent use items (e.g., drinking a bottle of pop for health) and the rest (as well as some of the independent use items) can be combined in some manner. I'd say that there are at least 10 different things he can make. Some items also require multiple steps to complete.

Most of the puzzles will have a single solution, but, where possible, we'll try and add multiple solutions. We're trying for some adventure-like qualities to the Doctor, but we also don't want players to get totally stumped at the puzzle parts.

**GR: I GATHER THAT THE FINAL LEVEL WILL BE NAVIGABLE WITH THE CHARACTER OF YOUR CHOICE, AS OPPOSED TO THE EARLIER ONES WHERE YOU HAVE TO USE A PARTICULAR CHARACTER. HOW WILL THAT WORK? WILL THE LEVEL BE DESIGNED SO THAT ANY CHARACTER WILL BE ABLE TO COMPLETE IT, OR WILL EACH CHARACTER ENCOUNTER A DIFFERENT ENDGAME TAILORED TO THEIR ABILITIES?**

GZ: Your latter hypothesis is correct. Each character will have a specific set of obstacles, tailored to his personal skills, to tackle before the final fight as well as a different endgame tailored to his abilities.

**GR: ON A RELATED NOTE, WILL THERE BE ANY EASTER EGGS YOU CAN UNLOCK BY COMPLETING THE GAME WITH ALL THREE CHARACTERS?**

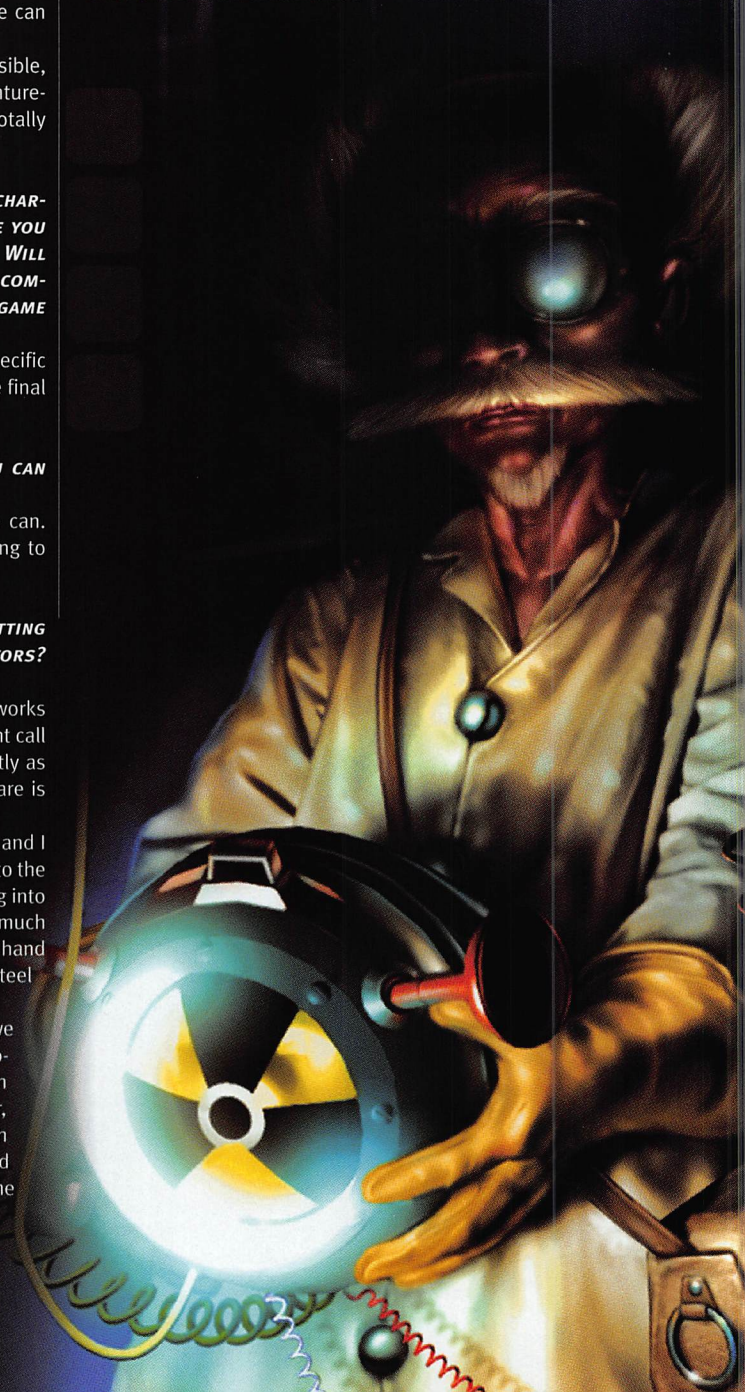
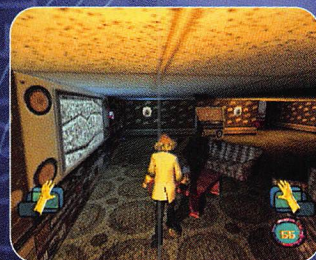
GZ: Probably. We're planning on adding as many secrets as we can. There already are a few that are in there but we're definitely going to want to add more.

**GR: TELLS US A LITTLE BIT ABOUT YOUR BACKGROUND BEFORE GETTING INTO GAMING. WE HEAR YOU WERE/ARE PRACTICING MEDICAL DOCTORS? WHAT COMPELLED YOU TO GET INTO THIS INDUSTRY?**

GZ: Both my partner Ray and I are practicing medical doctors. Ray works out of town filling in for physicians in rural areas while I do overnight call at a local rehabilitation and geriatric hospital. We work infrequently as physicians, but we do try and work a little bit every month. BioWare is currently taking up the majority of our time.

We started BioWare to produce medical education software. Ray and I created a couple medical education projects that found their way into the local medical school curriculum. When we started looking at getting into more serious development, we discovered that there really wasn't much of a market for education software, and instead decided to try our hand at our favorite hobby, video games. We started with Shattered Steel and have been going ever since.

We've assembled an awesome 67 person team at BioWare that we consider to be the best in the world. Ray and I now function as co-executive producers for BioWare's games: I'm focusing primarily on MDK2 while Ray is working on Neverwinter Nights and another, unannounced project. In conclusion, I can say that we're both extremely happy to be a part of BioWare, and, I can also say, Ray and I both feel that we are very lucky to work on some really awesome games with some really great people.





# THE KING OF FIGHTERS

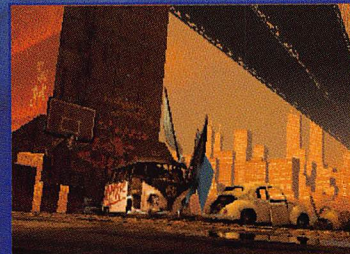
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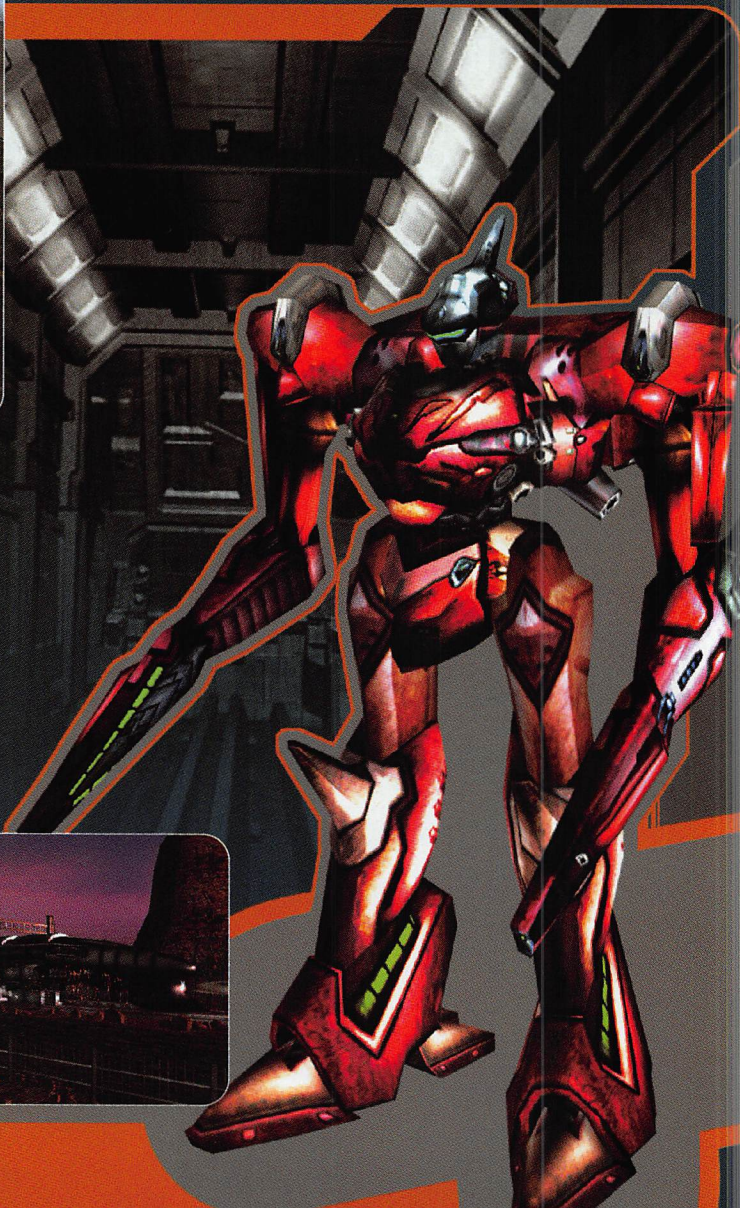
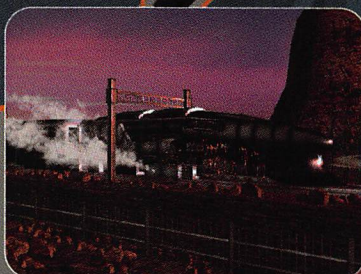
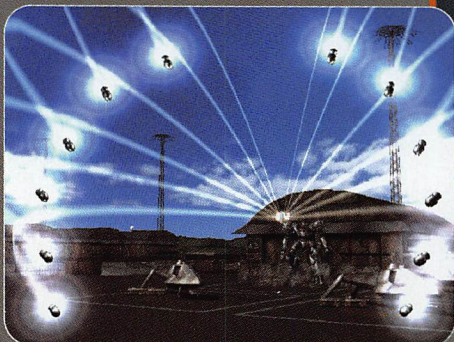
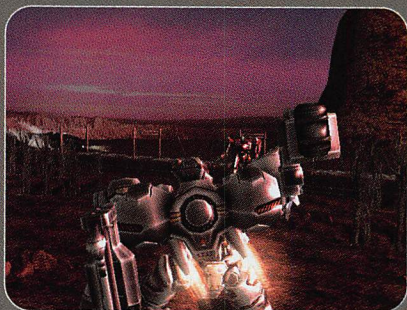
# ARMORED CORE 2

BY DAVID SMITH

Concerning the first PlayStation Armored Core expansion, Project Phantasma, a higher-up at From Software once said, "This is not Armored Core 2. If we were to make Armored Core 2, it would be beyond your imagination."

He was right. Many scoffed at, or at least were puzzled by, the lack of a true sequel to the original PS mech sim. It was followed only by two expansion discs. Now, however, it seems evident that From Software were saving themselves for something very big. Armored Core 2 is on the way, and it is indeed more impressive than we could have ever imagined, at least before the arrival of the PlayStation 2.

Animation has always been the inspiration for giant robot video games, of course, but no game has ever really looked as good as stuff like *Do You Remember Love* or *Patlabor 2*. Not true anymore. AC2's mechs are hulking, heavily armed, amazingly detailed monsters, brought to life by superb special effects. Checkout the particles flying about thruster jets, the smooth highlights on polished armor, and the sweet Macross Plus missile contrails; if this is first-generation third-party development, we're in for a hell of a ride in the years to come. While Armored Core 2 is not definitely slated for release with the PS2 launch, it will surely follow close on its heels. Expect it sometime around next summer in Japan. 





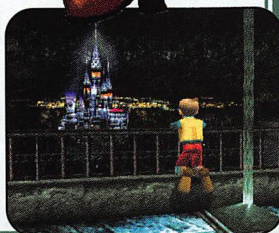
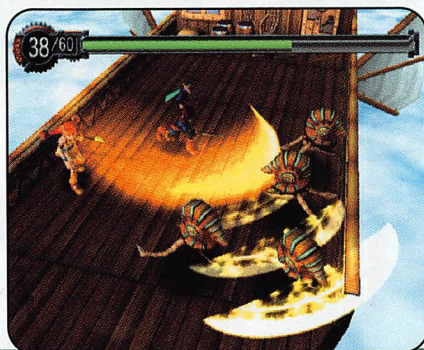
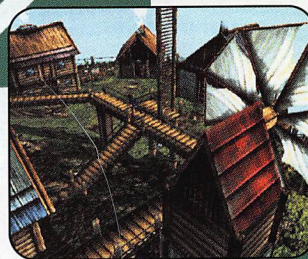
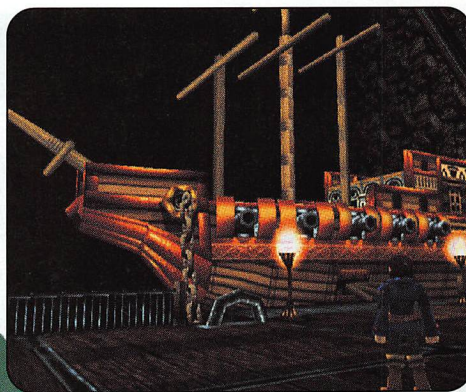
# ETERNAL ARCADIA

BY DAVE SMITH  
and JUN SAKAI

**F**rom Sega of Japan's introduction to Eternal Arcadia: "A sky of dark blue spreads in all directions...All in this world is air. People live, vacantly floating, a ship for an island. The skies are a place of life, a place of trade, and yes, a place of war."

The best Japanese RPGs have a flair for the poetic that no American developer has ever gotten the knack of. Fun though they are in their own right, the Ultimas and Might & Magics of days past have always been a bit more about nuts and bolts than personality. It was touch and go, then, for a little while, when there was nothing from the genre to look forward to on the Dreamcast but a vague, misty promise of Grandia 2.

Lucky for us, Eternal Arcadia is coming together beautifully. It spins a tale of exploration amid conflict that reminds me of the first Grandia: The hero, a young boy named Vyse, sets out to see the uncharted skies, while a grasping nation constructs a great floating colony with conquest in mind. The 3D worlds he travels through show great detail in their textures and polygon models, and there's a quality to the fleets of airships that's simply breathtaking. I suppose I've a little Miyazaki in me (just none of the creativity or talent), or perhaps the Chevalier St. Odhran would be a better comparison. Geek literary nonsense aside, Sega's team of Dragon Force, Sakura Taisen, and Phantasy Star veterans is set to outdo their previous efforts, and we eagerly await further information, particularly concerning the required American release.

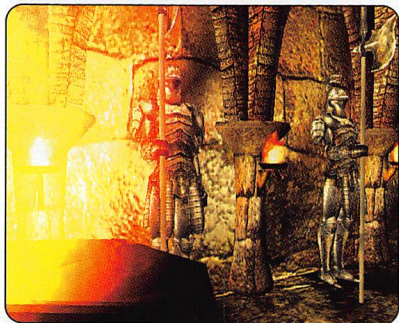




# ETERNAL RING

BY DAVE SMITH and JUN SAKAI

*Eight rings, eight dragons, and a wealth of amazing detail. From Software prepares to kick off the PS2 in style*

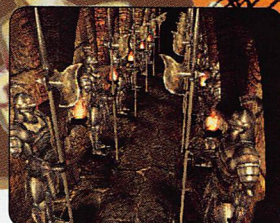


Either God or the Devil is in the details. I'm not sure which is the canonical interpretation; it seems the saying can go either way. At any rate, in the case of ETERNAL RING, From Software's PlayStation 2 debut, it is the details that convey the game's impact. From has said, "We are trying to challenge the limits of the hardware. The graphic effects for the dragons are awesome, but the creation of natural objects, such as splashing water and the light from burning flames, is much more spectacular."

It's that re-creation of the environment that could push ETERNAL RING over the top. Its plot is a little mundane: as warrior Cain Morgan, you visit the Island of No Return to find eight magic rings and defeat the eight dragons that rule the island—not quite the soul of innovation. The gameplay mechanics of the eight elemental rings sound very interesting, though. You combine their Flame, Water, Light, Dark, Thunder, Ice, Wind, and Earth powers to cast spells and power up your character. And the details, of course, are wonderful.

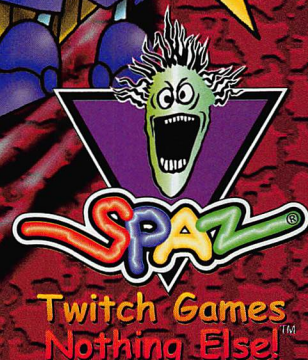
The island's areas are broken up into various themed areas, built around features of the

environment, such as a volcano gushing rivers of lava, or a mountain range covered in drifts of snow. Indoors, in villages and castles, the textures and lighting are equally impressive. The history major in me is particularly impressed by the suits of armor that line a long hallway; the shining highlights and etching in the texture detail make up for the fact that no knight worth his spurs would sit for that kind of raised detail on his breastplate. We'll have more on ETERNAL RING as the details become available, but not for too long; it's currently slated to be a PS2 launch title.



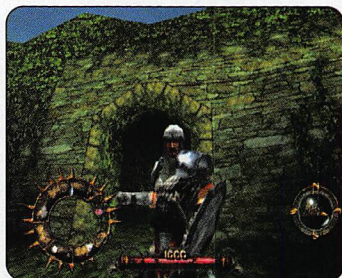


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# DRACONUS

BY DAVE HALVERSON

*From Treyarch comes the first fantasy adventure for the Dreamcast. Choose your warrior and have at a lethal brood of evil*

**G**ames that carry Draconus' gothic guise are usually limited to the real-time-strategy variety for PCs—clunky affairs where you must brave complex interfaces to enjoy the keeps, towers, and castles that make up a good medieval adventure. It's a welcome sight to see a game of this period carrying the action/adventure moniker, especially on the Dreamcast—powerful hardware with a strong new user base hungry for their next adventure. Throw in a short guy with an axe and call him "Battler" and you'd really have something, but that is a story for another day. Perhaps Draconus will serve as the Golden Axe of the new 128-bit era. The game certainly has a lot going for it, although our version was quite early, devoid of music, the right sound effects and voices (I hope), many AI routines, and other key ingredients that will ultimately tie this intricate game together.

What I did decipher from my initial play test was that Draconus is utterly unique to the rest of the Dreamcast stable currently available and on the

horizon. More than just a garden-variety hack 'n' slash adventure, the story revolves around Dragonbane—two descendants of a once mighty king (you select to play as the beautiful sorceress Aeowyn or Cynric the warrior), their assault on the Dragon Lord and his Dragon Knights, and the repulsive Insect Queen. You are charged with keeping these rising evil forces from destroying the last bastions of humanity. To do so, you will wield three weapons and 22 spells against 30 diverse and highly detailed types of enemies, which populate over 15 diverse levels, from tree fortresses to dank keeps and murky swamps.

But that's not all you'll do. The game is loaded with role-playing elements, as well as a unique animation system (coined VSIM), which creates remarkably fluid fighting sequences with seamless animation: imagine someone dynamically filming your combat to give you an idea of the game's dramatic battle engine. Draconus is definitely one to watch in the months ahead as we approach the second wave of Dreamcast software in America. ⚡





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that day, sales to retail of LUNAR: Silver Star Story for the PlayStation® game console will cease. Forever. The end. Omega-time. Sales have far exceeded expectations, and being the mentally-challenged non-MBA gaming-types we are, we thought it would be kind of cool to say "Enough! All the cool people know what's up have already bought the game anyway. Had the experience. Are probably listening to the free soundtrack and fondling the other free stuff right now, laughing at the ignoramuses (or is that ignorami? We never can remember...) who still call anime 'that freaky Speed Racer stuff.' Why not keep this game at least a LITTLE bit of a secret and make the penny-pinchers who haven't bought it yet end up paying too much on eBay™ when they realize what a terrible mistake they've made?"

If you think that passing on the "Ghaleon Experience" has something to do with floating Spanish doo-dads, you're definitely missing the boat. In that case, about all we can offer you by way of consolation is "Ignorance is Bliss. Keep your damned tainted burger-emporium-earned money, you freaking spaz. You're not worthy. And don't count on your momma savin' your sorry butt with her awesome foresight, 'cuz she already spent the family dough on wunder bread and kool-aid. Bon Appetit!"

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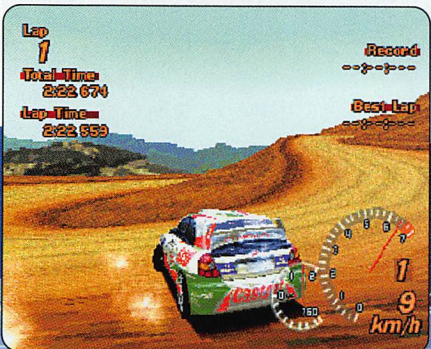
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# GRAN TURISMO 2

BY MIKE HOBBS

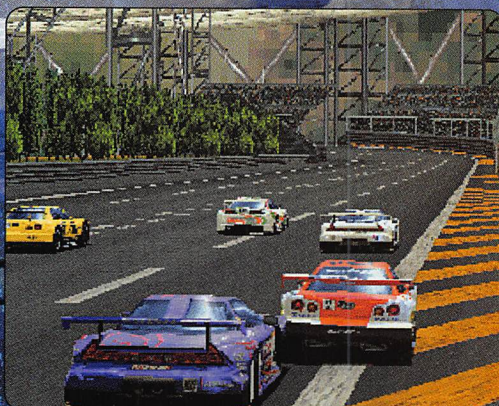
It is with a heavy heart that I pass on the news of Gran Turismo 2's delay. Originally scheduled to ship in America around the time that you would be reading this, GT2 has slipped to first quarter 2000, meaning that Sony is going to miss out on the undoubtedly massive Christmas bonanza. Apparently, the licensing of the game's nearly 500 real-world cars was more of a legal maze than anyone had anticipated. But Polyphony Digital obviously wanted to get everything in the game that they promised, and it's good that Sony recognized that the quality of the game is far more important than just one shopping season.

I had a chance to sample Gran Turismo 2 at this year's Tokyo Game Show, and it was an eye-opening experience. The stellar engine from the first game showed tan-

gible improvements in all areas, and in my car of choice, a Honda S2000, I was all arms and elbows trying to keep the thing on the track. A good sign, as it's not supposed to be easy to pilot a car on the limit around a road course, and fears of a tamer game thankfully went bye-bye. However, Polyphony has relented a bit in the difficulty of obtaining the licenses necessary to compete in the different racing classes. Not only can you transfer license data from the original game (a great move), but the actual tests are less severe in GT2, making the game just a shade more user-friendly without compromising the purity of the racing.

Five hundred cars, nearly double the number of tracks, two discs (one for arcade, the other for GT racing), and the most envious pedigree imaginable should send Gran Turismo 2 into orbit when it's finally released next year. Of course, the game will be out a touch sooner in Japan for all you industrious import shoppers, but in a couple of months, we'll all be very happy indeed. >X<

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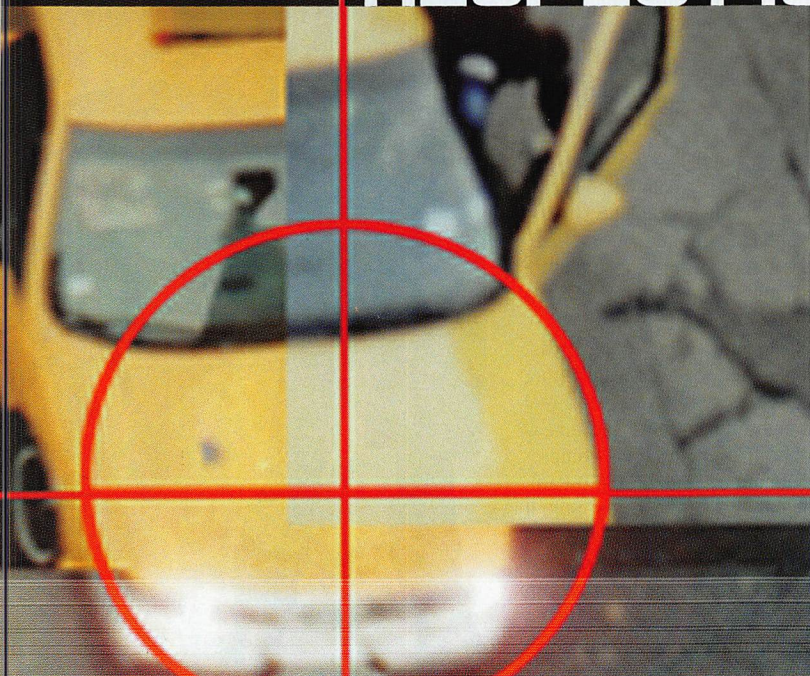
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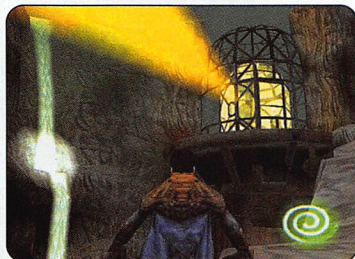




# LEGACY OF KAIN

## SOUL REAVER

BY DAN JEVONS



Eidos' shrewd support of the Dreamcast continues with an opportunistic conversion of Crystal Dynamic's 3D vampire odyssey, *Soul Reaver*. After numerous lengthy delays, the highly anticipated PS sequel to Silicon Knight's *Legacy of Kain* was finally released earlier this year to widespread critical and commercial success (the game has since shipped over a million units worldwide) with a "sequel" already in the works.

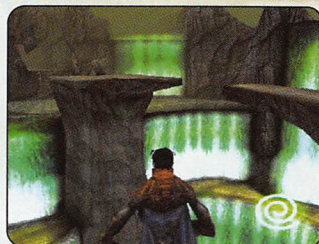
Despite some serious flaws (the worst being the fact that Crystal Dynamics seemingly cut the game in half at the last moment!) *Soul Reaver* is still one of the most engrossing and entertaining action/adventures available on PS, and now it's DC bound.

Although Eidos hasn't released many specific details about the Dream-

cast conversion, it seems likely that it will be a direct port of the recently released PC version. So what does that mean for Dreamcast owners? Well, it means you'll get all the soul swallowing, block pushing, plane shifting action of the PS original with a Dreamcast-style graphical face-lift. Expect a higher resolution (640 x 480), more detailed textures, a smoother frame rate (the PS version gets pretty choppy at times) and, fingers crossed, better asynchronous loading thanks to the GD-Rom's superior data transfer rate.

Yes, it's a shame that Eidos isn't taking the time to add any exclusive Dreamcast features—owners of the PS version need not apply—but for action/adventure fans who have yet to partake of the *Soul Reaver* experience, you're in for a real treat. My only concern is how the PlayStation/PC's eight-button control scheme is going to translate to the Dreamcast's six-button pad. Obviously, some compromises are going to have to be made (like putting camera rotation on the D-Pad), but that might have a significant effect on the overall feel of the game. Still, if Eidos can figure out a satisfactory solution to the control dilemma, and deliver on the promised aesthetic enhancements, then by all accounts the Dreamcast

should become home to the definitive version of *Soul Reaver* - not something to be taken lightly. Hey, now there's three DC games with the world "Soul" in the title! ☞





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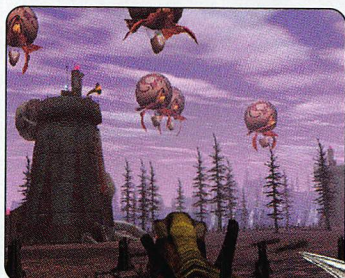
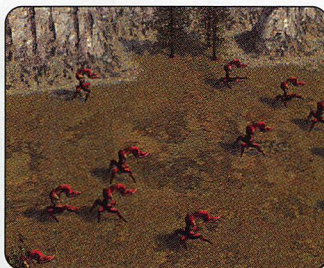




# ODDWORLD

## MUNCH'S ODDYSEE

BY BRADY FIECHTER



Something quite extraordinary is brewing in the fertile minds at Oddworld. It's called Munch's Oddysee, and propelled by the boundary-shattering power of the PlayStation 2, it is unlike anything you have ever seen before.

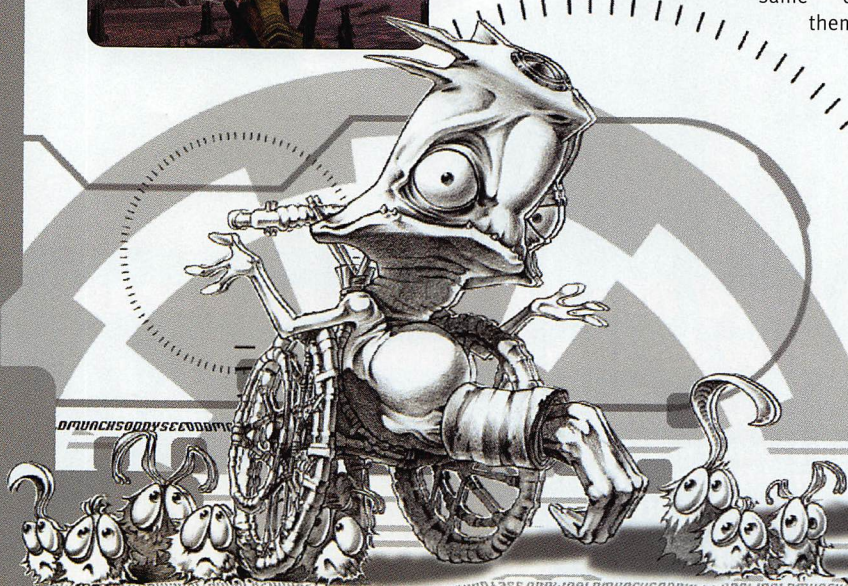
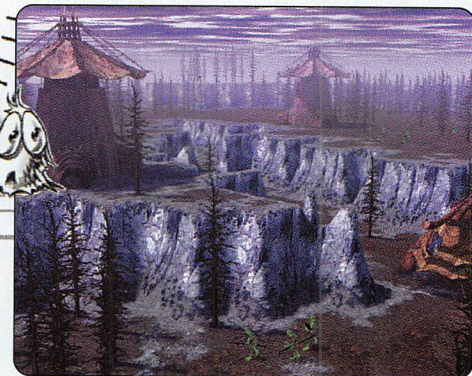
The second game in the Oddworld Quintology and the third adventure for the tireless Abe, Munch's Oddysee will be exceptionally true to the rich, dim Oddworld universe, which could previously only be realized in a 2D reality. "Aesthetically speaking, we want the environments to be in check with what was previously seen from Oddworld's 2D games," says Lorne Lanning, the game's creative director. "This universe has been planned from the beginning. Meaning, we introduced Abe and Oddworld in 2D while always planning to evolve them into 3D when the technology was there. Of course, we will be creating new environments, but it's all in the same design theme as

to what makes Oddworld's landscape unique."

Many of the same creatures from previous games in the series will populate this new world, but they will be much more advanced, exhibiting life cycle patterns that imbue them with uncommonly realistic intelligence and habits. As for the new enemies joining the ranks, "some will be much larger in scale, some will have strange co-dependent relationships, some will be aquatic," says Lanning. "You'll also start seeing more herds and the like."

The Abe character will play a central role in Munch's Oddysee, but eventually the wheel-chair-bound Munch enters the picture, and you must utilize both characters to achieve your goals. The gameplay borrows from elements in the first two games, but the world interaction and GameSpeak process has become more focused and evolved. "We are simulating entire life cycles for all the characters in the world, all the communities, and even the landscape. We are truly going for a 'world' simulation approach rather than gauntlet types of puzzles that you saw in our previous games."

Munch's Oddysee has ample growing time before it launches with the PlayStation 2 late next year, but even in its infant state, the game is showing a remarkable sense of atmosphere and visual fantasy; just the way the magnificent creatures in the game animate, with a depth and sophistication never seen before, creates a sense of realism that has been previously unimaginable. It is understandable when Lanning says, "It will be more like visiting Oddworld than playing Oddworld." ✨







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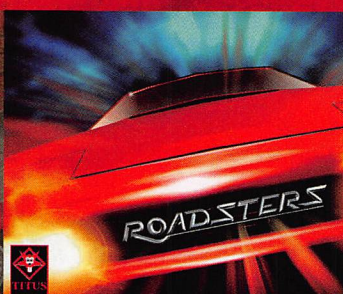
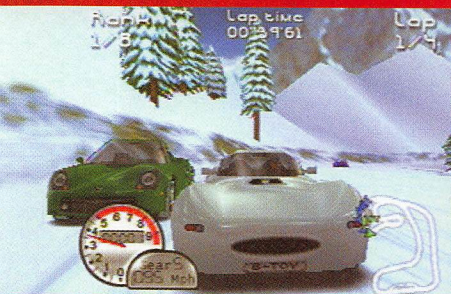
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# RE-VOLT

BY MIKE HOBBS

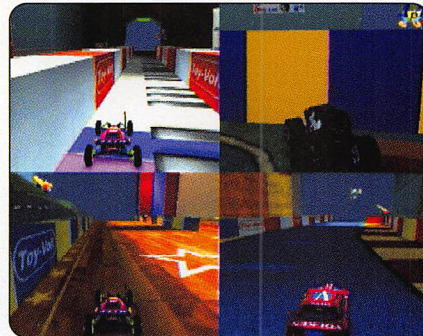


*Acclaim Studios London manages a great-looking PC port in Re-Volt. The fun of RC car racing comes to the DC in high style*



Let's face it. The Dreamcast has too many racers. I can think of eight right off the bat, and this on a system that has only been available in this country for about three months. Thankfully, most have been pretty good, and the ranks are set to grow by one more with Re-Volt, a great-looking RC car racer that at least brings something unique to this crowded genre. Developed in London by Acclaim Studios, Re-Volt for Dreamcast is the best attempt I've yet seen at capturing the appeal and fun of RC car racing, as the apparent physics of 1/10th scale cars have been implemented perfectly. Through all manner of life-size environments, you'll struggle to keep the lightweight cars pointed in the right direction. Clipping a bit of environment on the inside corner of a turn can send your car spinning like mad, and it feels true to life. Even the little antennas whipping about and the distinctive, plastic-y whine of the electrics and the brappy exhaust note of the glow-engine-powered cars are done perfectly. But far from being a straightforward RC racer, Re-Volt features a slew of weapons and defensive pick-ups, including bottle rockets, water balloons, oil slicks, giant steel balls, and turbo boosts.

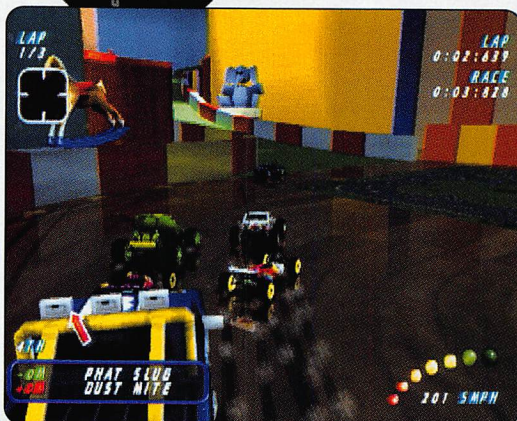
Re-Volt gets another lift from an impressive list of gameplay options. In addition to a cool



little track editor, there are stunt, battle, and championship modes as well as a four-player split-screen that actually holds up pretty well.

As expected, this Dreamcast version annihilates the previously released N64 game, and does a fantastic impersonation of the PC iteration, complete with lighting effects and great-looking reflections. Especially impressive is the museum level, its polished floors highlighting dashes beneath towering dinosaur skeletons and a trip through a living planetarium.

With a few more tweaks here and there to go before it's complete, we've been asked to hold off on the review for a bit longer, but Re-Volt is looking like another solid racer for the Dreamcast's admittedly overflowing racing library. >X<





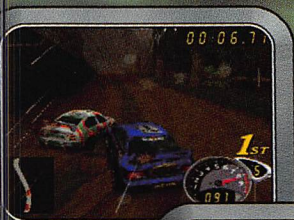
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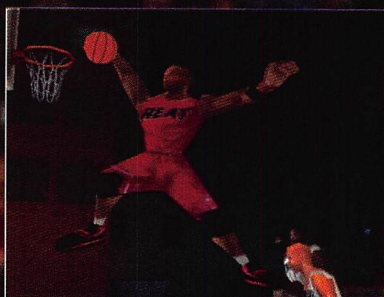
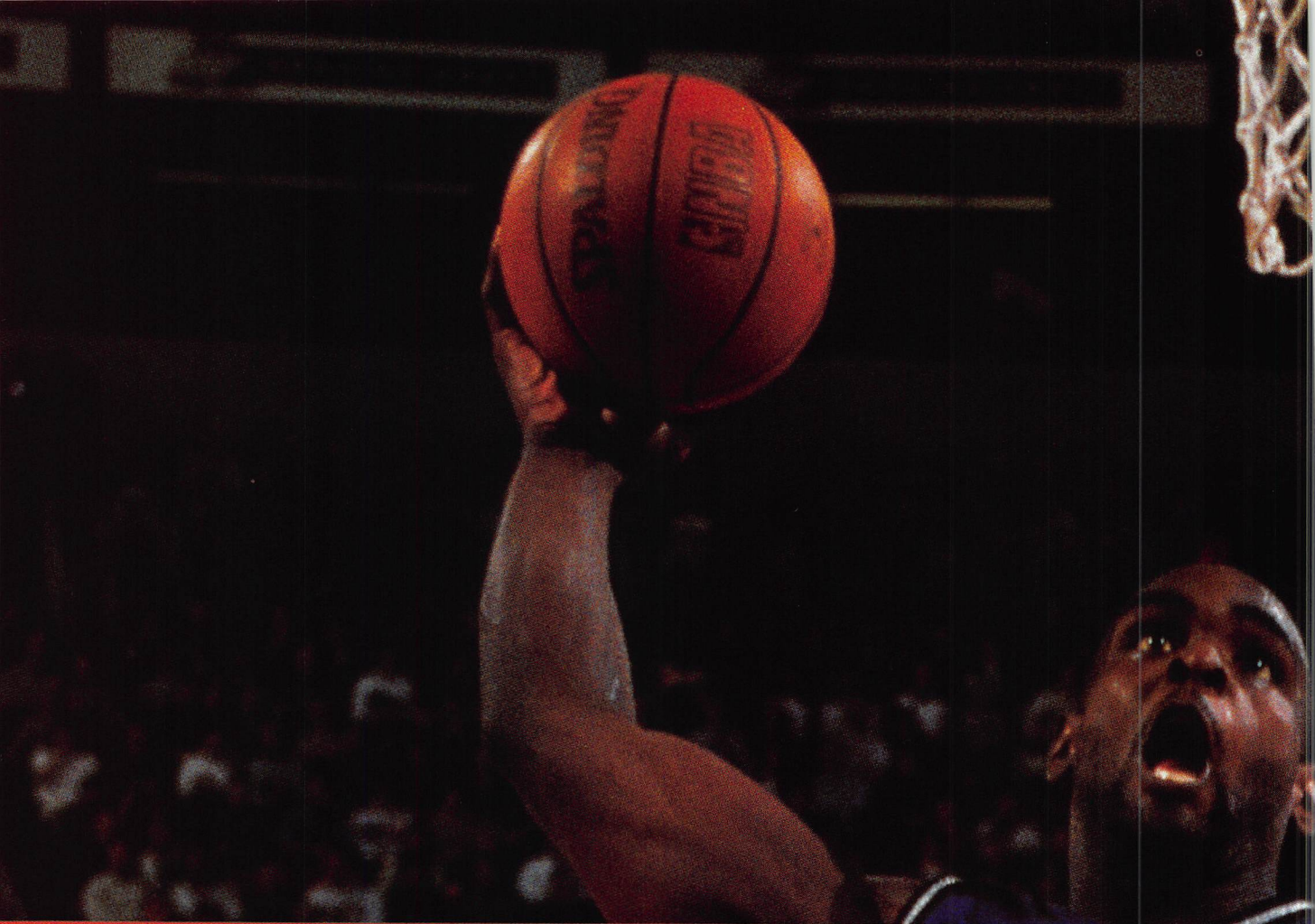
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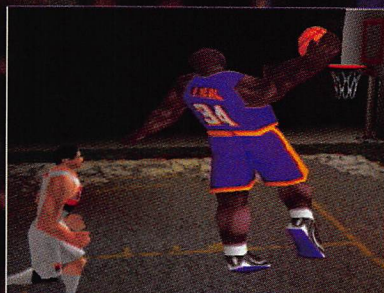
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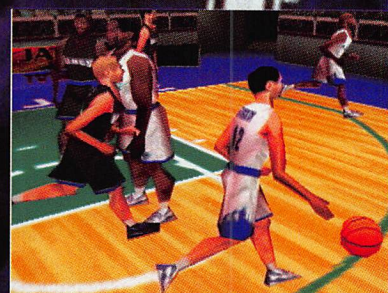




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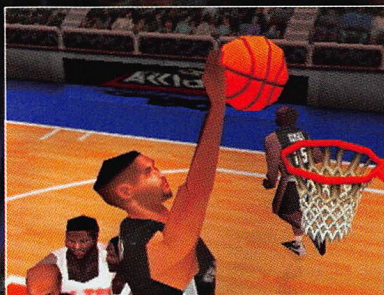




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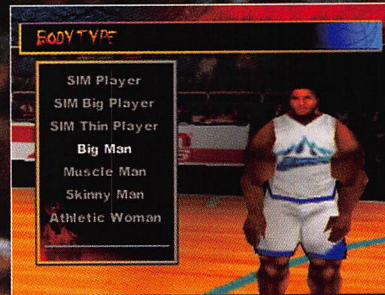
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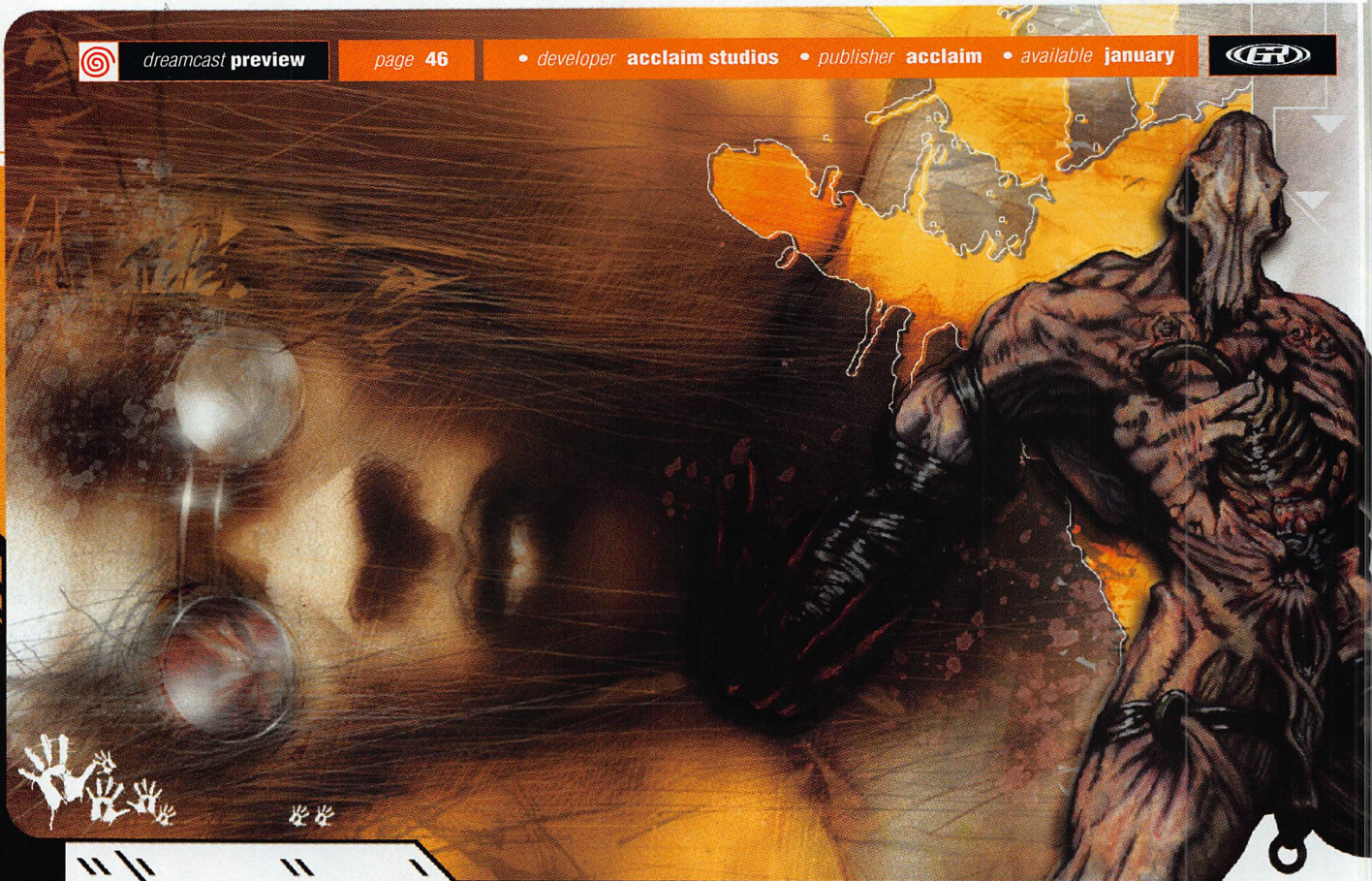


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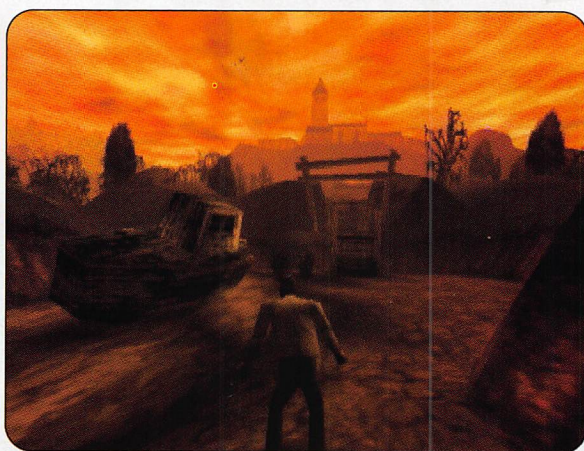
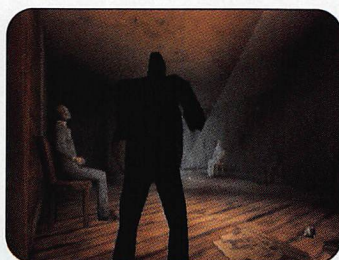
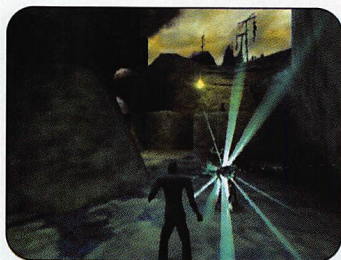
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# SHADOW MAN

BY BRADY FIECHTER

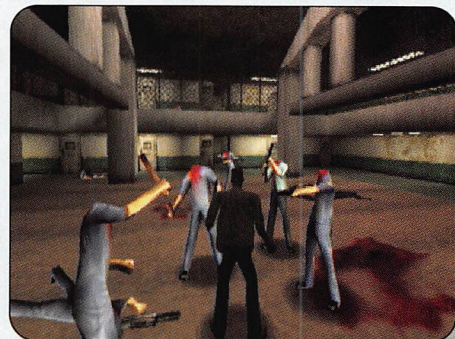


Acclaim has ventured into the shadows of their imagination to unearth the oppressively dark and twisted *Shadow Man*, one of the most atmospheric games I've played since *Silent Hill*. Inspiring all the doom and gloom is the apocalyptic tale of voodoo magic and ancient evils, revealed through the spoken dialogue between the game's English-Lit-graduate-turned-assassin central figure, Mike LeRoi, and the various entities he encounters. Using the supernatural powers of his murdered brother's teddy bear, Mike travels from his normal reality to the realm of the dead, where he must find and destroy an elusive group of five serial killers known simply as "The Five."

Continually moving between reality as Mike and the grim *Deadside* as his dark persona *Shadow Man*, you must find various clues and solve extensive puzzles while confronting an army of zombie-like beings. There is never a

shortage of exploding bodies and piles of flesh and blood; in the *Deadside*, the death animations are exceptional as the enemy violently bursts apart from brilliant streaks of energy escaping its body. There are multiple weapons to use for instruments of death, and you can equip both hands for added firepower, or choose to carry a flashlight or other helpful item.

*Shadow Man* revels in its dread, and it has the sense to use its mood to great effect by allowing exploration and atmosphere to breathe, wisely taming the action at the right moments. I've only begun to explore the enormous depths of this unsettling game, but what I've uncovered so far is engrossing. ✱





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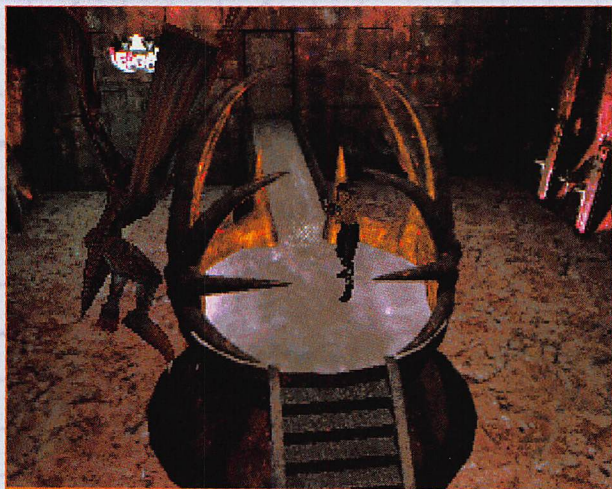


## COUNTDOWN VAMPIRES

• developer/publisher: bandai • available: spring 2000



It is January 1, 2000, and, oddly enough, fire has yet to rain down and the Earth has yet to explode. The partygoers at the Desert Moon Hotel in Las Vegas are thrilled to be alive in the new millennium, so they decide to celebrate by submerging themselves in debauchery. Because this is an action/horror game in the vein of Resident Evil, this story of pleasure naturally sinks into violence and gore, and as the party burns on, everyone is infected by mysterious black water that pours from the sprinkler system, turning them into vampires. Your part in all of this is as a celebrity bodyguard who must discover the root of all the horror, putting a stop to it with heavy firearms and, of course, brain power for those obligatory puzzles. ✱



## HYDRO THUNDER

• developer/publisher: midway • available: jan 2000



After playing the Dreamcast version of Hydro Thunder, turning to the Nintendo 64 translation of the popular arcade boat racer requires an extra dose of objectivity. While the game is still early, it's obvious that the arcade sheen is going to be substantially dulled, leaving Hydro Thunder to rely much more on its race-for-the-boosters gameplay to buoy the experience. Which means...well, I'll save my opinions for the review version. ✱



## SOUTH PARK RALLY

• developer: tantalus • publisher: acclaim • available: winter '99



I may as well come right out and say it: I love South Park. I laughed so hard at the Chimpokemon episode I almost gagged, and I consider the *South Park* movie one of the best social satires of our time, as well as the best musical ever. I must also confess that I really didn't want the PlayStation version of SP Rally to formulate my first opinions of the game. Based on the way the first South Park games matched up, the N64 and Dreamcast versions will be far superior, so I'll keep this brief.

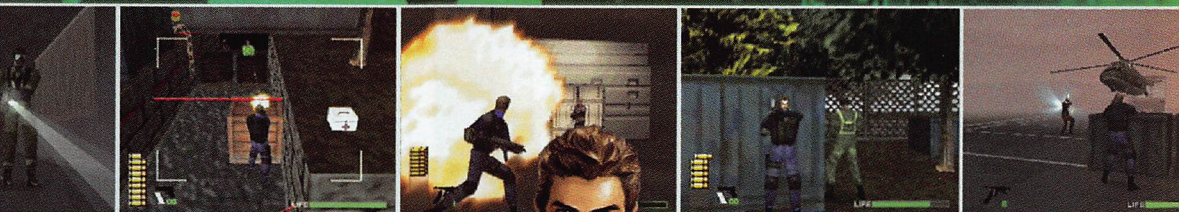
The first question that needs addressing is, why would anyone make another kart game in the first place? A valid question, it is more easily defined in the case of the N64 and Dreamcast than it is on the PlayStation. On the N64, Mario Kart is now somewhat aged-looking in the grand scheme of things, so there is certainly room for competition. And as for the Dreamcast, well, it has none, so draw the obvious conclusion (and what better way to start). But in the case of the PS, well, Crash Team Racing will be insanely difficult to beat. Besides hardcore SP fans, I don't see this version finding much of an audience. The rest of you, listen up. Not only is SP Rally a full-blown kart racing game complete with monstrous

tracks, shortcuts galore, and all the weaponry you'd expect to find in South Park, but it's also a true rally game through and through. Each level harnesses all of the aspects of a real rally, such as a trophy dash. After winning a straight race you find yourself scurrying to grab a trophy (or other items), and then racing to hit four checkpoints, while avoiding the rest of the pack, making for a crazy game of cat and mouse. These aspects of SPR not only juice up the one-player game but make multi-player far superior to your standard kart fare. Of course, the coolest thing about SPR is that you get to hear all of the sweet commentary that has helped make South Park the most hated cartoon of the people you love to piss off the most! I'll return with an SPR review as soon as SPR review as soon as humanly possible. ⚡





The first blast wiped out your Space Center.  
In just 3 hours, the high-tech weapons  
satellite will strike again...It's your job to  
make sure that it doesn't.



"Explosive  
N64  
adventure"  
...Nintendo Power



4 - Player Deathmatch,  
along with Lethal Tag,  
Cube Hunt, And Quick  
Draw.



- ⦿ Intense 3rd Person  
Action/Shooter
- ⦿ Precision laser-  
sighting aiming  
mechanism
- ⦿ Immense 3D  
Environments
- ⦿ Battle heavily-  
armed Boss  
Characters and  
"smart" enemies
- ⦿ Rumble Pak  
Support

# WINBACK

## COVERT OPERATIONS

NINTENDO 64



[www.koeigames.com](http://www.koeigames.com)







## ARMORINES: PROJECT S.W.A.R.M.

• developer: probe • publisher: acclaim • available: q1 2000



I may avoid Acclaim's *Armorines* entirely, on account of I cannot abide the company of giant bugs, even if the point of the game is to get in suits of nifty powered armor, travel to locations the world over, and splatter their numerous limbs about the environment. Those who get along better (or perhaps worse) with the insect kingdom should have great fun, especially with the soon-to-be-released N64 version, which includes Expansion Pak support for high-res graphics, even in the four-player split-screen mode. ☹



## TEST DRIVE 6

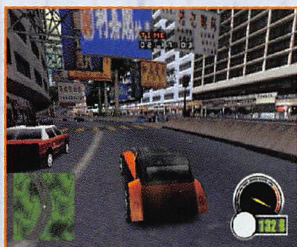
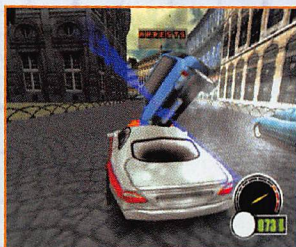
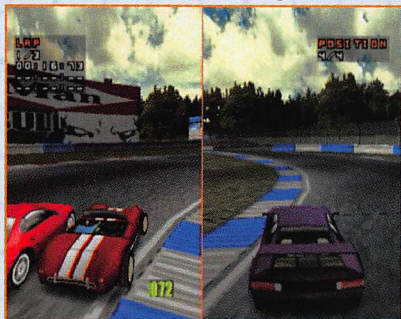
• developer: pitbull syndicate • publisher: infogrames • available: tba



What's this? Why, it's another racing game for the Dreamcast. I really don't mind as long as the quality is there, but *Test Drive 6* has a little ways to go before it can sit comfortably next to Sega Rally or even Buggy Heat. Not that great of a sign, as this is the sixth entry in the series, so one would expect a certain kind of mastery at work.

A spate of real world cars gets *Test Drive 6* off to a good start at least. Lotus Elises, Audi TTs, McLaren F1s, and Caterham 7s should satisfy auto fetishists. The problem, at this stage, is that the cars just don't look very good, with uniform reflection effects that rob them of any sense of detail. And the tracks are in need of some work too: some look good, but most are awash in simple geometry and, frankly, lousy road textures.

Let's hope that the final version of *Test Drive 6* is a lot better than this preview copy (not something that happens often), for in this crowded genre, there is no room for the average. =\*



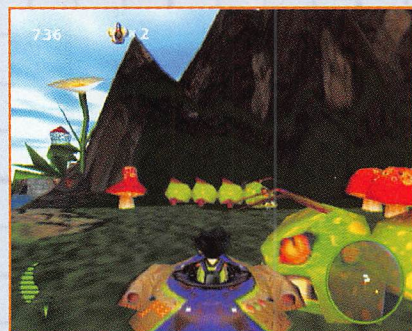
## CENTIPEDE

• developer: atari • publisher: hasbro interactive • available: nov 99



The beta version of *Centipede* for the Dreamcast has the colorful world of the original, the many insectoid enemies, the deadly poison mushrooms,

and not a great deal else. The update to 3D adds some platforming elements and a first-person mode, but the former aren't very significant, and the latter just turns the game into a (shock) first-person shooter, and there are much better games available in that genre. The graphics also need tuning; the frame rate is very low for a DC game, and there's significant pop-up in the first-person view. Yes, you can play the original version of the game as well, but you could do that in the PlayStation version months ago, which is another reason to wonder why this Dreamcast port is in the works. ☹

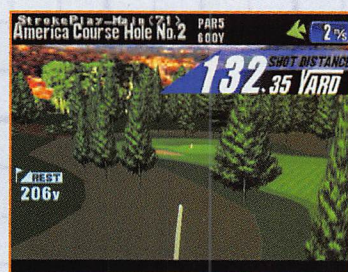


## TEE OFF GOLF

• developer: bottom up • publisher: acclaim • available: jan 2000



The Dreamcast has elevated basketball and football to new heights, but can it do the same for video game golf? With *Tee Off Golf*, the answer is "probably not," but that's not to say this first representation of the sport on Dreamcast isn't a solid effort. With its colorful courses and anime competitors, *Tee Off Golf* is immediately appealing, and the intuitive, arcade-style gameplay affords quick pick-up-and-play. A familiar swinging arc determines the shot of the ball, which can be altered by spin and club angle. All the basic options you would expect from a golf game are included; customize your equipment, and you'll be tearing up the five world-wide courses in no time. ✨





# GAMERS' REPUBLIC REVIEWS



## GAMERS' REPUBLIC REVIEW SYSTEM

- [A+ to A]** Games in this bracket are the best of the best. They feature the highest quality visual presentation, and are excellent in both initial and long term playability. The very best video game of its type, worthy of every gamer's undivided attention. *Example: Resident Evil 3*
- [A- to B]** Excellent, solid, and highly playable pieces of software, although they lack minor polish to become truly outstanding. Slight frame rate problems, a marginally disappointing ending or any number of small quirks may take an otherwise exalted release down a notch. *Example: Donkey Kong 64*
- [B- to C]** Games in this bracket are generally very good, but may have one or more flaws. A game receiving a B- may be a great game that's just too short or has irritating music, while a C may have these same problems plus a couple more. Very good to average entertainment. *Example: Speed Devils*
- [C- to D]** Games in this bracket require serious help in two or more areas. Perhaps the control responds horribly and the characters animate poorly. Although a game of this caliber may have had a great initial concept, it was never fully realized in the final stages of design. *Example: Jet Moto 3*
- [D- to F]** Very rarely will you come across a game of this lack of quality. A complete dearth of vision, a determination to remove any semblance of gameplay or fun, and particular attention made to use none of the most rudimentary of the system's proprietary tools. *Example: Mortal Kombat 4*

## GAMES REVIEWED THIS ISSUE

### DOMESTIC REVIEWS

40 WINKS	B-
BASS RISE	C-
BROKEN SWORD 2	C
CHOCOBO'S DUNGEON 2	C
CASTLEVANIA: LEGACY OF DARKNESS	C+
DUKES OF HAZZARD	C-
EVOLUTION	B
FORMULA ONE '99	B+
GRAND THEFT AUTO 2	B+
MISSILE COMMAND	C
PONG	B
PSYCHIC FORCE 2012	C+
Q*BERT	B-
SAGA FRONTIER	B+
SHADOW TOWER	D
SILENT BomBER	B
SLAVE ZERO	C-
TWISTED METAL 4	C
WU-TANG	B+

### IMPORT REVIEWS

BANGATO	A
CHU CHU ROCKET	A-
GIGAWING	C
LANGRISSER MILLENNIUM	B
ROCKMAN 4	C

### SPORTS REVIEWS

COOL BOARDERS 4	C-
NBA 2K	A+
NBA LIVE 2000	C+
WWF ATTITUDE	C+
THRASHER	C

### GAME BOY COLOR REVIEWS

ASTERIODS	B-
BOARDERZONE	B+
MISSILE COMMAND	C-
TEST DRIVE 6	B-

- Games marked in **RED** are highly recommended for your gaming collection.
- Games marked in **YELLOW** should be avoided completely.

[Subject to the reviewer's personal preferences, it can be generally accepted that any game scoring a B or higher is a great way to spend your day. Games scoring a low D or F should be microwaved for three seconds and returned.]



Fairly or not, we've come to expect big things from Square, so when a little random dungeon RPG like Chocobo's Dungeon 2 finds itself spinning in the PlayStation, it comes across as a little underwhelming. Of course, it doesn't help that I played the English version of Sting's Evolution on Dreamcast this month, but the shortcomings of Chocobo's Dungeon 2 are apparent enough as it is.

The biggest superficial disappointment in Chocobo's Dungeon 2 is the basic look of the game. This is unfortunately common to random dungeon RPGs where the bulk of the gameplay generally takes place in nondescript rooms connected by narrow passageways. Not even the Dreamcast's Evolution can escape this, but as Square games go, this one looks unabashedly cheap. Even the little rendered characters are not that thrilling to look at. It's only in the frequent and very cute CG FMV sequences that the game shows any of the visual flair that Square has become known for.

Thankfully, the gameplay fares a little better than the graphics, though it too is not without its frustrations. There is nice depth in the item mixing feature and a good sense of advancement as you make your way through the multi-level dungeons. However, the turn-based system, where monsters take steps and act only when you do, is annoying and makes combat predictable and tiresome, even with the opportunities to exercise clever battle tactics.

I'm not entirely convinced of the worth of random dungeon RPGs. There's just something that feels sort of pointless about them, and Chocobo's Dungeon 2 does little to counter this notion. Better graphics and a simpler, more free-flowing game style like Evolution could have done the trick. -\*

# CHOCOBO'S DUNGEON 2

BY MIKE HOBBS



13F Lv 19 HP 84/128 41%



■ VERY CUTE SQUARE CHARACTERS  
■ CONSISTENTLY BLAND GRAPHICS

■ GENERALLY EXCELLENT SOUNDTRACK  
■ ANNOYING TURN-BASED GAMEPLAY

REPUBLIC SAYS...

FUN IN SMALL DOSES BUT ULTIMATELY NOT THAT COMPELLING, CHOCOBO'S DUNGEON 2 IS A LITTLE LESS THAN WHAT WE'RE USED TO FROM SQUARE.

C



# BOOMBOTS™

WHEN CAT ALIENS LAND ON EARTH, THE FUR IS GONNA FLY.



Cat aliens have taken over the Earth. Boombots are here to stop them. Command 15 Boombots through 15 far-out arenas of real time 3-D fighting action!

DREAMWORKS  
INTERACTIVE

Neverhood



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SOUTHPEAK™  
INTERACTIVE

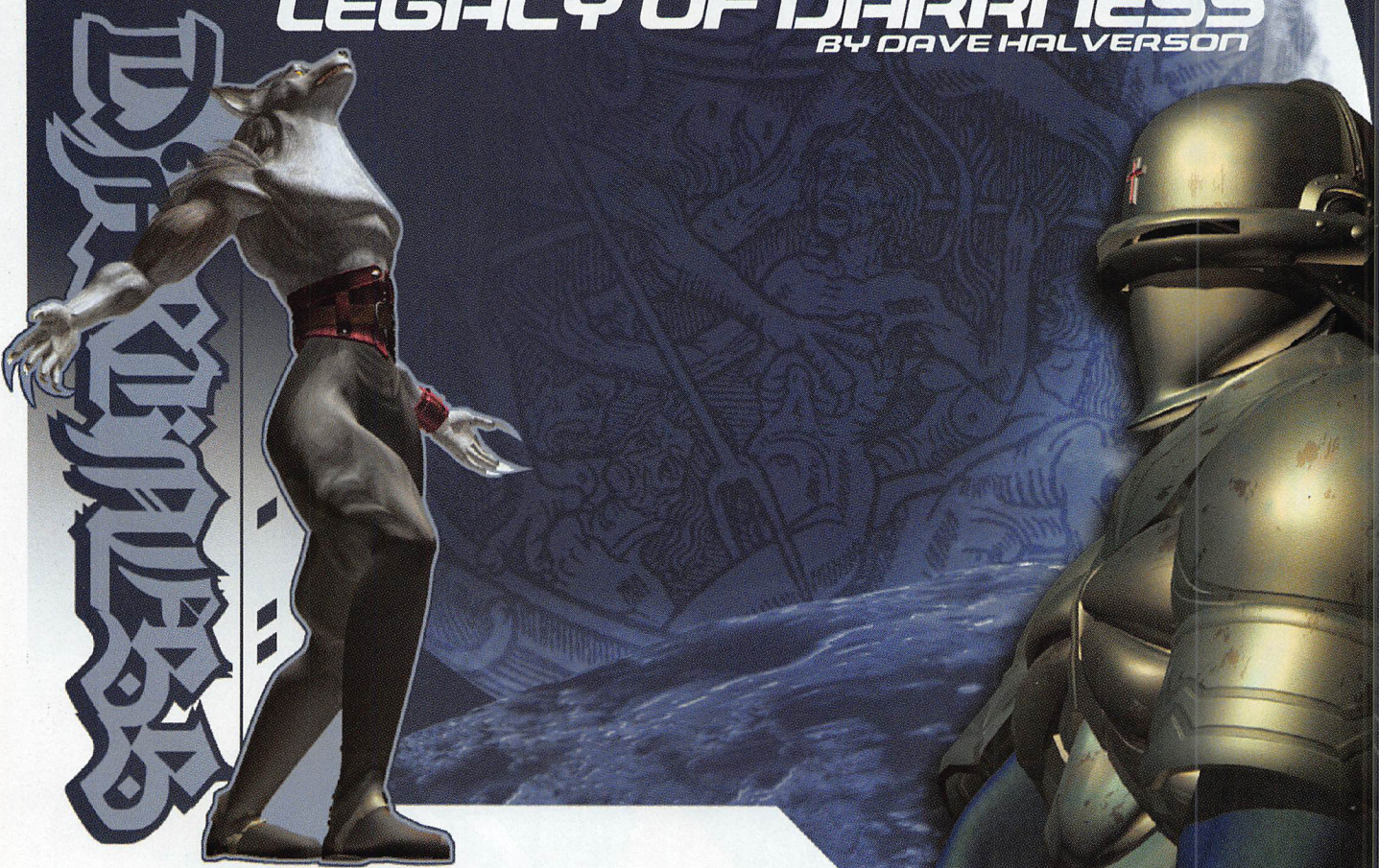




# CASTLEVANIA

## LEGACY OF DARKNESS

BY DAVE HALVERSON



*A chance for redemption becomes another failed attempt, as the lifeblood continues to be sucked from one of gaming's greatest legends*

Does that strap line sound a little harsh for a C+ game? Well, it would be if it were a first attempt, but this is sadly the second and last Castlevania for the Nintendo 64, one of the greatest hardware platforms of our time. Rather than giving fans the 2D they've been begging for, Konami has dredged up last year's tired 3D engine and fully realized what wasn't that great of a game in the first place.

Granted, the game has its merits, which I will explain, but overall it's somewhat of a stab in the back to fans, who will now have to wait and wonder if the next game in the series, Castlevania Resurrection (which is also, sadly, 3D), will do justice to its legendary bloodline.

Besides Carrie and Schneider from last year's game, CLoD includes two new characters, each who will explore a different path and storyline as they make their way into, through, and up the castle walls. Cornell's game, which is the most worthy of the four if you played





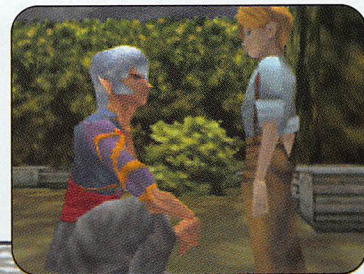
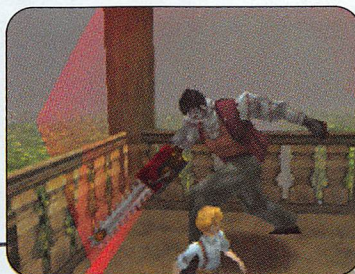


last year's, starts off well. As Cornell approaches the castle, an all-new serpent guardian rears its scaly head. Soon after, the mansion level, with its Shining-like hedges, seems far more realized, with a nice puzzle to solve as Cornell rescues a young boy from his vampire father and a chainsaw-wielding Frankenstein. I know, chainsaws in Castlevania...wha? Cornell's a man-beast whose sister, Ada, has been kidnapped to be sacrificed to complete Dracula's revival. His best friend Ortega (I know, it's salsa), also a man-beast, has been turned by Dracula, and so his quest is two-fold. By using jewel power Cornell can transform into a werewolf at any time. Once transformed (besides resembling Altered Beast big time), his powers increase substantially, although he moves exactly as he does in human form, which is somewhat of a letdown. Cornell also has a pretty effeminate jump animation that doesn't serve his beastie guise too well.

The gameplay remains much as it was last year, in that the characters appear and control rigidly, lacking fluidity and animation. The game doesn't have bad control; it's just somewhat robotic. A new lock-on feature does help during boss

encounters, but otherwise the game tries to make up for its lack of fluidity by auto-facing you onto a ledge or platform that is improperly lined up as you leap. And leap you will: textbook platforming stunts are in full effect. A few mildly perplexing puzzles (in which those sun and moon cards are finally used) are included as well, but mostly simplistic platforming rules the day. The game's real downfall, of course, is this dreadful engine that slows down for the oddest reasons. Even the Ram Pak can't save it from its murky, blurred semblance. Trotting across a simple stretch of armature among a pitch-black background, the game will actually slow down, as if it's sensing everything else going on in the environment and trying to handle it all at once. After playing Rayman 2, Jet Force, DK 64, and EWJ 3D, this perplexed me perhaps more than any-

► CONTINUED ON PAGE 136



One of the game's finer bits with Cornell has you rescuing a young boy, Henry. After you slay his vampire father, his mother requests you help him escape the mansion, and so the game's hedge maze takes on a whole new meaning... Frank really wants you to stay for dinner!



■ AN EASY GAME FOR BEGINNERS  
■ SPORADIC INSPIRED MOMENTS HELP IT ALONG

■ THIS ENGINE NEEDS TO BE RETIRED  
■ CHARACTERS ARE STIFF AND ONE HAS A GUILTY CONSCIENCE

REPUBLIC SAYS...

WHILE LoD IS BETTER THAN LAST YEAR'S GAME OF GREY, IT'S STILL NOWHERE NEAR THE MAJESTY OF IV, BLOODLINES, OR SYMPHONY. KONAMI NEEDS TO MAKE THEIR WAY BACK TO 2D.

C+







He is coming.

Walking between worlds...

Traveling the road of souls from Liveside to Deadside

And back again.

A dead man is coming, skull in one hand,

flambeau in the other...

a voodoo mask in his chest

and lines of power in his back.

A possessed man is coming,

stalking evil in tenements and deserts,

subways and swamps,

spirit world and real world.

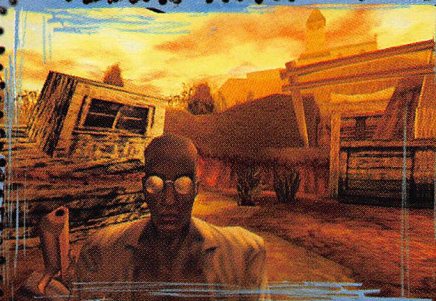
Shadowman is coming...

To stop the Apocalypse.

To save your soul.

# Shadow Man

Walk on  
the Deadside



Warning:

This game  
is recommended for  
mature audiences only.  
It contains adult content.



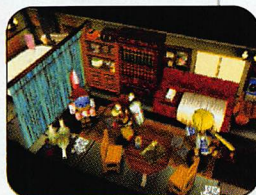
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# EVOLUTION

BY MIKE HOBBS



## *Ubi Soft recognize the worth of Sting's random dungeon RPG. It's no epic, but solid graphics and gameplay save the day*

**S**ting's *Evolution* carries with it the rather unenviable importance of being the first 128-bit console RPG to be released in the States. True, it's not a "real" RPG, but rather a small-scale random-dungeon affair. But that won't stop people from comparing it with the best of the 32-bit systems. Under such scrutiny, *Evolution* quickly collapses, but seen for what it intends to be and what it actually is, this is an undeniably enjoyable experience. Go in expecting a quaint little adventure, and you won't be disappointed.

Of course, the game itself is unaware of its significance and place in the scheme of things, and it happily goes about its prescribed duties, exuding appeal and cheerfulness at every step of the way. From the delightfully goofy music that plays during the more amusing cinemas to the hilariously emotive characters, *Evolution* turns on the cute Japanese charm full blast. And the character design, especially that of the hero, Mag Launcher, son of the legendary adventurer, Asroc, is fantastic. With his Swiss Army-like Cyframe (complete with a giant white fist for attacking) and wide-eyed, expressive countenance, he immediately

endears himself to the player. So too the other members of the cast, like the barelegged Pepper Box with her pink Rent-a-Hero shades, and Linear Cannon, Mag's dainty sidekick who is more than she appears to be. Watching the little characters emote during the real-time cinemas is an absolute treat.

But no game can survive on appealing characters and charm alone, and *Evolution's* simple but addictive combat-based gameplay carries the player through the adventure with an unassuming air. After receiving an assignment from Society, your little three-party team enters a randomly generated, multi-level dungeon peppered with monsters and various treasures and items. You generally tackle them in any order you wish, as their layouts and monster levels will change to suit your character's experience and relative strength. Unfortunately, most dungeons are nothing special to look at as they're really nothing more than simple strips and basic rooms with no real scenery to speak of. And in reality, the random nature of them is more or less a non-feature, as you seldom need to leave a dungeon and return to actually find it different. But the combat within the rudimentary halls hosts enough strategy to be plenty entertaining.

Your characters are constantly learning new attacks and



Mag  
What do you want?  
What did you do to Gre?





## Evolution stars a wonderfully designed cast of characters

abilities, giving a satisfying sense of powering-up on the way to the impressive bosses parked at dungeon's end. And moving through the rather ho-hum dungeons is made very tolerable by a surprisingly good score that sets a great mood during the mindless exploration and appropriately picks up during the fight scenes.

On paper, Evolution doesn't appear to have much going for it. One town, a handful of simple, randomly generated dungeons, and a sub-20 hour quest are not the makings of an epic RPG for the ages. But in its own, light-hearted sort of way, Evolution succeeds as a gameplay experience by never putting a foot wrong. For all its unassuming scale and ambi-

tion, it is supremely well-produced, with a tight, but-toned-up feel that evokes the sensation of a good 2D game.

The appeal of Evolution may be lost on those mistakenly expecting a Final Fantasy or Grandia-like adventure. No, this game's sights are set a measure lower, and does what it sets out to do very well. It's not a very long game, nor is it overly complex or even very difficult, but it always had me looking forward to the next play. Certainly not a bad way to start the RPG ball rolling on Dreamcast, but also not quite the defining moment that the first 128-bit RPG could have been. >X<



EVOLUTION

- CRISP, HIGH RESOLUTION GRAPHICS
- GREAT CHARACTER DESIGN AND MUSIC

- ADDICTIVE COMBAT SYSTEM
- BASIC AND MINDLESS DUNGEONS

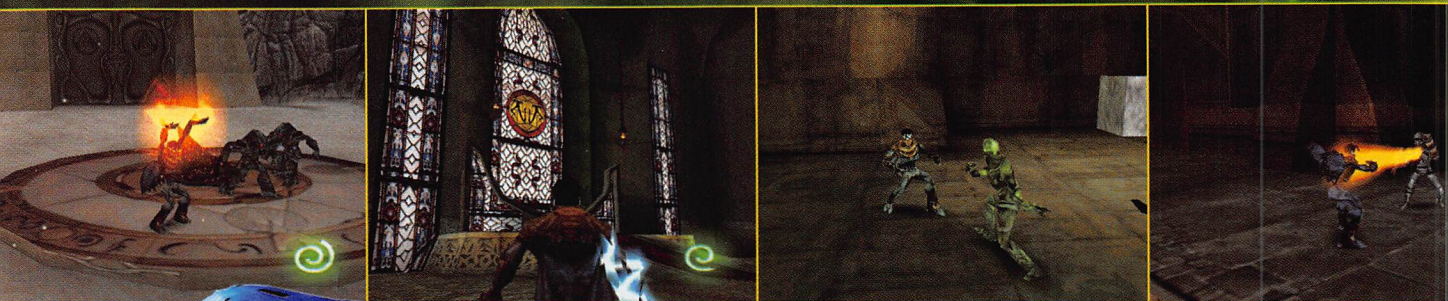
REPUBLIC SAYS...

EVOLUTION IS NOT THE STUFF OF 128-BIT DREAMS, BUT IT DOESN'T SET OUT TO BE A GENRE DEFINER. IT'S A SOLID, SIMPLE, AND FUN QUEST THAT WILL ENTERTAIN.

B



# "The Critics have Spoken on the Action / Adventure Game of the Year!"



"A technical achievement...Soul Reaver  
delivers an epic piece of  
vampiric literature...93%"  
– IGN.com

"Soul Reaver is a deep game  
possessed with a myriad of  
impressive little touches...9/10"  
– VideoGames.com

"3D exploration and adventure  
at its finest...Game of the Month."  
– Expert Gamer Magazine

"Soul Reaver's environment's are jaw dropping."  
– Gaming-Age.com

"98%"  
– PS Extreme Magazine

✦ As Raziel, stalk Nosgoth feeding  
on the souls of your enemies

✦ Engage your creator, Kain,  
in an epic struggle for dominance

✦ Dark gothic story

✦ No load times

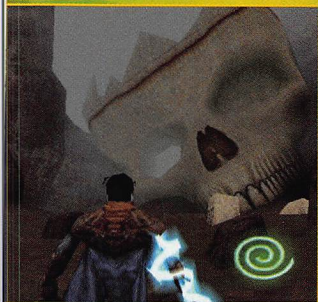


Sega Dreamcast™



Now on  
Sega  
Dreamcast!

# LEGACY of KAIN™ SOUL REAVER



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# SILENT BOMBER

BY MIKE HOBBS



If there is a human predilection towards destruction, it certainly makes a grand showing in *Silent Bomber*, a blazing new action game from Bandai and Cyber Connect, developers of the very cute, very different *Tail Concerto*. This time around, they've traded fuzzy cats for napalm blasts and revealed a surprising breadth of design and programming talent.

*Silent Bomber* has the feel of a 3D run-around shooter like *One*, but a cleverly implemented attack style makes it unique. Instead of having a straightforward gun or other projectile-based weapon, you've got manually detonated bombs that can either be dropped in place or locked onto and flung at targets. This turns out to be a very satisfying concept: loading up an enemy with bombs and blowing them to smithereens with the press of a button is devilish fun. Cyber Connect were smart enough to make this potentially cumbersome play element very intuitive and very fast, lending *Silent Bomber's* gameplay an effortless and ceaseless intensity.

And that intensity can only exist because of the strength of the engine, which renders the environments and massive, screen-shaking explosions with ease. Your character is tiny and the mostly overhead view certainly saves on processing power, but there is great three-dimensional depth to some of the levels, with typically solid Japanese mechanical design dictating the aesthetic. Throw in massive bosses and a mixture of real-time and rendered cut scenes and you've got the makings of a great-looking game.

There are some minor annoyances

to be found in *Silent Bomber*, though none of them crippling by any means. For instance, later levels feature some aggravating off-screen fire, the jumping response is a touch slow, and like a lot of straight action games, it's a little short and starts to feel a tad repetitive toward the end as the concept inevitably begins to wear itself out. These are acceptable shortcomings, as the rest is so good.

Cyber Connect has delivered another solid title here, and they've done it respectfully, without repeating themselves. One play of *Silent Bomber* should convince anyone of their skill, both subtle and obvious. They have become a developer to watch. —



■ ADDICTIVE, NON-STOP DESTRUCTION  
■ SOLID ENGINE HANDLES ACTION WITH EASE

■ CLEVER, WELL IMPLEMENTED DESIGN  
■ HOLLOW-SOUNDING MUSIC

REPUBLIC SAYS...

A SATISFYING DOSE OF PURE ACTION, *SILENT BOMBER* TAKES A NOVEL SHOOTING CONCEPT AND MAKES A GREAT GO OF IT. IT'S SHORT BUT SWEET.

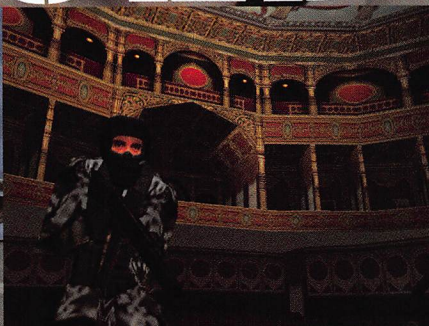




Tom Clancy's  
**RAINBOW SIX**  
**ROGUE SPEAR**

www.redstorm.com

# MISSED ME?



Team Rainbow is back in full force. Rogue Spear, the sequel to PC Gamer's 1998 Action Game of the Year, immerses you even deeper in the explosive action of an elite multinational strike force.

Rogue Spear feels so real, you'll be yelling 'Tango Down!' in your sleep for weeks. And the multiplayer action is to die for. Remember, when stalking the enemy: Walk softly but strike like a thunderbolt. You only have one shot to save the world.

- \* NEW REPLAY FEATURE
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# FORMULA ONE 99

BY MIKE HOBBS

With Formula One returning to the States next year at a new facility at Indianapolis, perhaps Americans will finally begin to appreciate and understand the world's most technically advanced form of motor racing. In the meantime, Psygnosis and developers Studio 33 are doing their part, exposing the massive PlayStation user base to a fantastic simulation of the sport with Formula One 99. Will anyone take notice? They should.

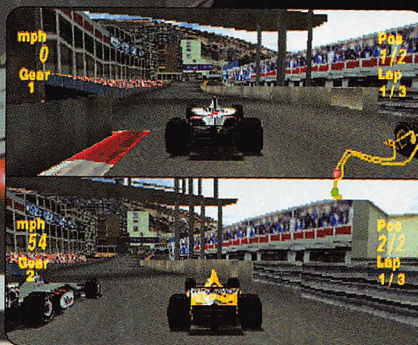
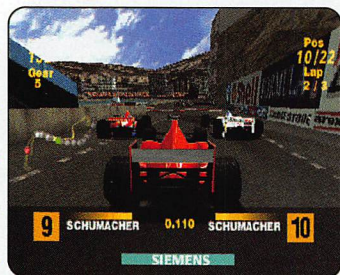
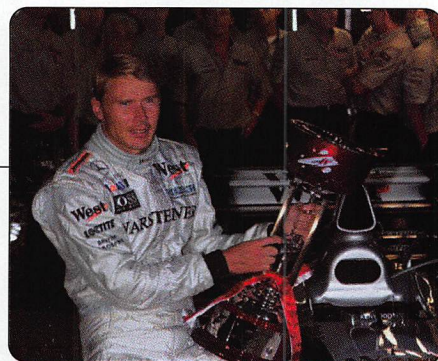
Easily the most visually accomplished game in the series, Studio 33 has really shown-up Visual Sciences, developers of last year's lackluster Formula One 98. The draw distance and level of detail in F1 99 is truly next-level for the Sony PlayStation. There is some serious trick programming going on here, as even with 22 racers on course, the frame rate remains stable, and the track is always there. The lead car (yours) is amazingly detailed, down to real-time reflection mapping and lighting

effects and working rear view mirrors in cockpit mode. And thoughtful details abound, such as the replacement of a continuous racing line with more realistic braking marks, and a speedy, easy-to-navigate interface. But if there is a downside to the game's otherwise impeccable sensory presentation, it's in the sound. Murray Walker, the voice of F1, returns with his ubiquitous commentary, but the sound of the machines doesn't measure up to the level of the graphics: there isn't the proper crackle of an F1 racer, the exciting juxtaposition of sounds that bless the real cars with an animal-like intensity. A tall order, but so were the graphics, and there the developers delivered.

As a game, this is obviously still a series best-suited for F1 fans, as only they can truly appreciate the real-world locations, the full roster of teams and drivers, the strict driving style, and the numerous car set-up options. That's not to say that this is a difficult game to get into or that there is something dynamically wrong with it, but the attention paid to detail will leave most non-plussed. However, a good game is a good game, and this is a good racer, but its greatness can only be experienced by followers of F1. »

## Mike's Formula One Season update

McLaren's Mika Hakkinen drove a mighty race to win the final round of the 1999 Formula One Championship at Suzuka, thus securing his second consecutive world title. This places Hakkinen amongst an elite group of champions. Congratulations Mika!



- ASTOUNDING GRAPHICS ENGINE
- FULL COMPLIMENT OF 99 SEASON DETAILS

- TYPICALLY OVERFLOWING WITH OPTIONS
- SOUND NOT WHAT IT COULD BE

REPUBLIC SAYS...

FORMULA ONE 99 FINDS AN ACCEPTABLE BALANCE BETWEEN REALISM AND PLAYABILITY AND IS THE BEST-LOOKING CONSOLE RENDITION OF THE SPORT EVER SEEN. MORE SHOULD PLAY.

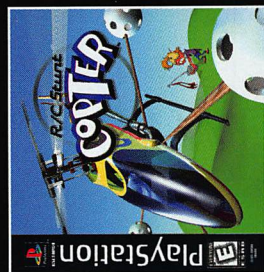
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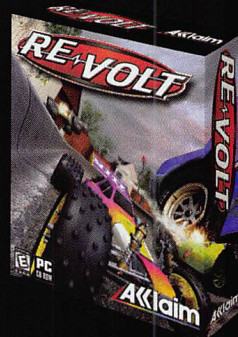
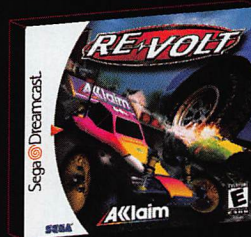
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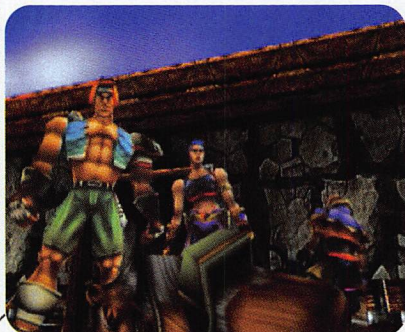
Radio Controlled Revolution





# SOUL FIGHTER

BY DAVE HALVERSON



I wouldn't normally care too much about an arcade-style beat 'em up. There have been so many over the years, yet so few have actually been good. The difference between a hit and a miss in this precarious category is determined by so many factors that developers seldom get them all right. But such is not the case with Toka's Soul Fighter, the freshest take on the beat 'em up since Sega's Die Hard Arcade. What makes Soul Fighter work, besides the gorgeous graphics, is the fact that several elements come into play within the game that you must master in order to reach the later stages. In other words, Soul Fighter isn't a walk-through. You must manage the contents of the sporadically placed chests, being careful not to squander their valuable contents; learn when to use your long-range weapons; master blocking, and, most importantly, dial in the enemies' AI.

The enemies in SF range in intelligence, skill, speed, and aggression. Should you stumble into a group, you'd better run, because no matter how madly you smash buttons (that's not what SF's about) they will overcome you,

and once they do, bounce you around like a rag doll. The trick is to lure single enemies in, and then once they're down, low kick them to sustain their stun until they perish. Should you have to take on three or four, mix your attacks between jump-kicks, punches and kicks, and always try to put space between you and them so that you can position yourself. As for the bosses, each has its own strengths and weaknesses, as bosses usually do, and

CONTINUED ON PAGE 136 ▶

*In their first effort since the Daytona-like Burning Road, Toka sets the stage for beat 'em ups on the Dreamcast*



- GORGEOUS TEXTURES RICH IN COLOR AND TEXTURE
- GOOD GAME MECHANICS—NOT JUST A BUTTON MASHER

- INSPIRED CHARACTER DESIGNS THROUGHOUT
- PRODDING VOICE GETS A LITTLE GRATING

REPUBLIC SAYS...

I'M THE FIRST ONE TO ADMIT THAT BEAT 'EM UPS ARE A DIME A DOZEN, BUT SOUL FIGHTER REALLY DOES GET IT RIGHT. THIS IS A GREAT ONE-PLAYER GAME WITH STAYING POWER.





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# SAGA BY DAVE SMITH FRONTIER II

*A hand-drawn, hand-colored masterpiece of visual invention.  
Square has created an adventure that looks and feels like no other*

After four Final Fantasy games have made the software top ten, I believe it's no longer suitable to talk about the "RPG boom" or the "Year of the RPG." It's just the market as usual, where role-playing games are a genre like any other. No development this year pleases me more, because it means that SaGa Frontier II, and more games like it, will arrive in this country. It's not a high-profile, mass-market sort of game. The plot is not quite the point, and its gameplay lends itself to practice and experimentation, not a quick cinematic pace. But a better-looking game has not crossed my desk this year, and only the very weak (who we shall point and laugh at) will be stymied by its difficulty.

What must be said about SaGa Frontier II before anything else is that the game looks absolutely beautiful. Even the most stalwart of our associates have been conceding that two-dimensional graphics are more or less dead, but this is proof that there are wonders you cannot create with all the polygons in the world. The entire game was drawn by hand, and the resulting level of detail is astonishing. Walk into an ordinary inn or shop and prepare to be amazed by all the odds and ends. The color, which again was done by hand in watercolor paints, adds yet another level of detail; the soft tones don't reach out and grab you, but if you pay careful attention to many scenes, the effect is marvelous.

These visuals are a suitable addition to the SaGa series' gameplay and plot structure, which are also quite original. SaGa Frontier II discards its predecessor's tortuous story progression, breaking its tale up into a series of episodes, about an hour







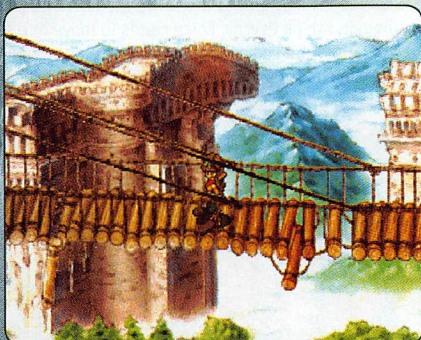
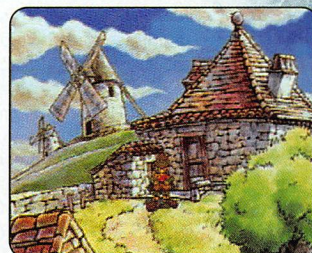
## *A complex system of weapons, items, and spells. RPG fans will have many opportunities to experiment*

each, separated by intermissions. Between episodes, you're occasionally given a choice between paths, allowing you to explore different scenarios. Thus, a very different game awaits you the second time through.

Combat and progression are identical to SaGa Frontier. Characters must be outfitted with items and weapons, but their most important attributes are the techniques that they learn in battle, which must be enabled by appropriate equipment. If that sounds complicated, it is; SaGa Frontier II isn't as user-friendly as some RPGs. You have to tweak your items and vary your tactics to develop characters that progress effectively. But where its predecessor served up brick walls despite long stretches of

character building, SaGa Frontier II has a smooth learning curve. If you study the system, you'll develop a powerful party and learn some very pretty magical attacks; 3D effects convey the impact of spells.

This is what the crusty elite has been waiting for since the dawn of the PlayStation: a gameplay-driven RPG that also happens to have it in the looks department. SaGa Frontier II may turn off some despite its superb graphics, but I believe a significant number of gamers, and serious RPG players especially, will find it a challenge well-rewarded by continuous visual splendor. ☺



■ AMAZING HAND-CRAFTED 2D ART  
■ DID I MENTION THAT THE GRAPHICS WERE AMAZING?

■ ORIGINAL CONTINUOUS PROGRESSION SYSTEM  
■ CHARACTERS AND STORY ARE OFTEN FAIRLY DRY

**REPUBLIC SAYS...**

A SERIOUS RPG FOR SERIOUS RPG FANS, AND DROP-DEAD GORGEOUS IN THE BARGAIN. WE'RE LUCKY TO GET OUR HANDS ON THIS ONE.

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## SLAVE ZERO

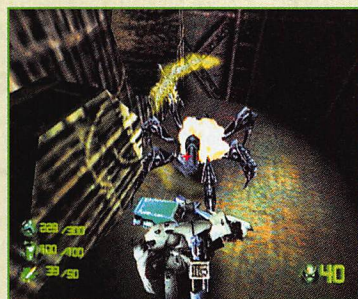
• developer: accolade • publisher: infogrames • available: now

Stomping around a futuristic city with the task of retrieving the very embryos that spawned the mech-suit you are piloting (all in the name of peace, of course) seems like a wonderful premise for a Dreamcast game, and it is. As I stated in my preview two issues ago, *Slave Zero* seemed destined to set the standard for 3D shooting adventure on the console. My complaints, which seemed trivial at the time, were that the enemy mechs didn't give you any sense of their mass, especially when they exploded (which could have easily been corrected with sound-effects and some mild physics tweaks), and that the frame rate chugged a bit (well, it actually chugs a lot at times). But most importantly, the lack of a soundtrack made it hard to get into the game, since *Slave Zero* relies a lot on its futuristic ambience. Of course, I presumed these were all attributes of its preview status, especially the "no music" part. I mean, all games have music, don't they? Well, my friends, apparently they do not, at least not any more. That's right, *Slave Zero* has no in-game music. According to the publishers, in response to an email I sent them on the matter: "Being that the technology on the DC is so new, it was impossible for us to dual stream sound, voices and music in the game. They (the developers) tried their hardest to get it in there, because there *is* great music, and it is in the PC version. But Sega was unable to help us get the music intact and working bug-free. The game will ship without music."

Now, normally I wouldn't care so much about this, but (A) this is a cool game, and (B) the Dreamcast can't stream music, sound effects and voice? Yeah, right. And even if it can't, why not have the voice cut in briefly while they talk? I smell a big ol' mecha rat somewhere! You can't imagine (well, maybe you can) what a let-down it is playing a game like this without music until you actu-

ally have to do it. Let me tell you, it sucks. What bugs me even more is that pivotal parts don't even have any sound effects!

When you kill the massive third boss, for instance, as its huge cybershell explodes in a fiery plume, you hear nothing! I wonder what the excuse is there? To make matters worse, they couldn't get the frame rate problem under control. *Slave Zero* had all the makings of a memorable experience, but sadly falls short on the Dreamcast. I have heard some good things about the PC game though, so if you are inclined to play all that is mech-driven (provided you have a PC), you may want to have a go at that version. ⚡



## PSYCHIC FORCE 2012

• developer: taito • publisher: taito • available: now

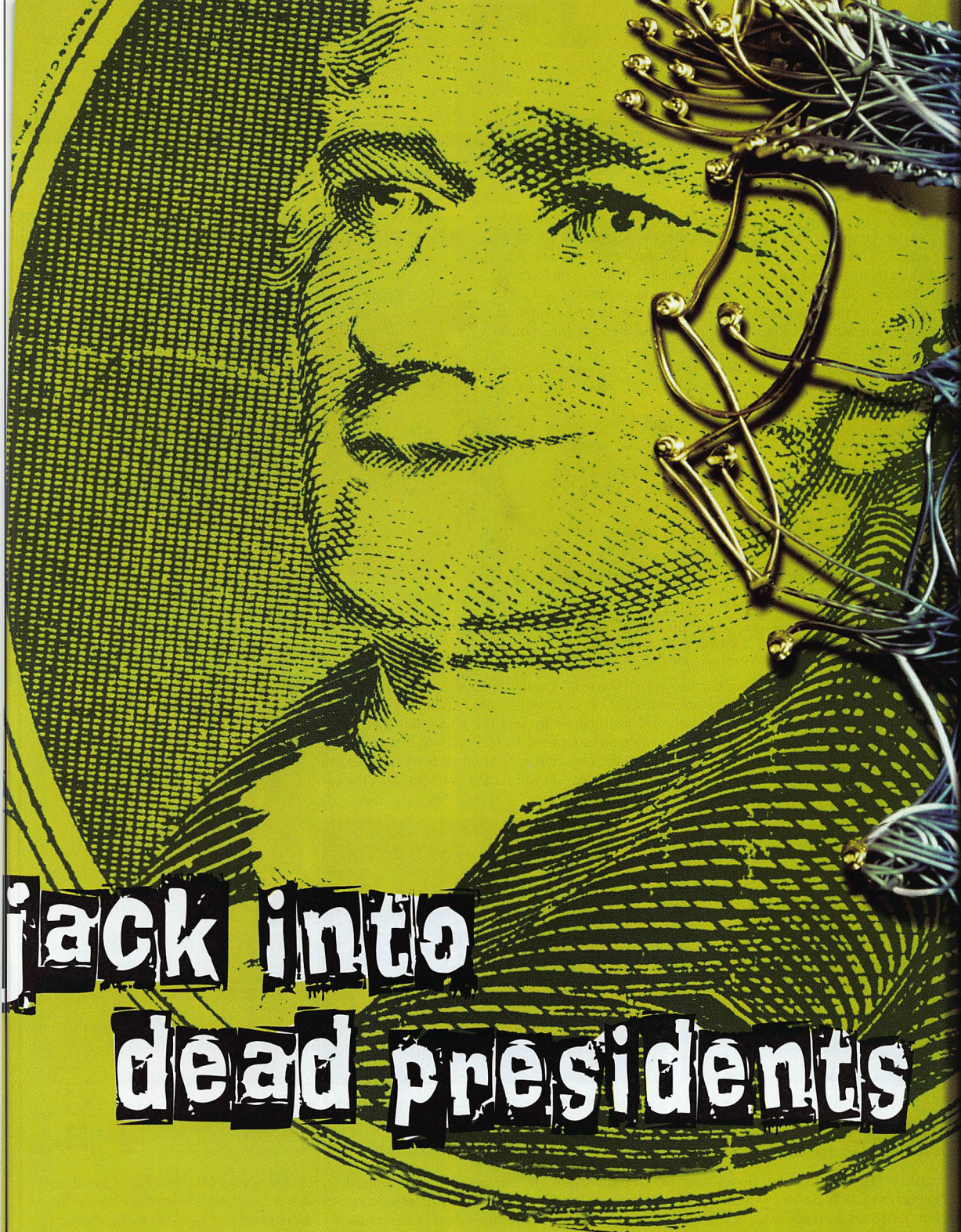


Taito's first 128-bit incarnation of their long-running zero-gravity fighter, *Psychic Force*, seemed mighty impressive back when it came out for the Japanese Dreamcast months before it was available here. Although it looks a little dated already, it does bring some fresh ideas to the table, has some great character designs, and has a superlative Zuntata soundtrack. Its comparatively simplistic models and backgrounds certainly look sparse against the specter of *Soul Calibur*, but I'm sure Namco's masterpiece is just getting started making other DC fighters go running home to mommy. While I do deem *PS2012* worthwhile to fans or vs. gamers looking for something a little different, after *Power Stone* and *Soul Calibur*, I also feel like the *Force* needs somewhat of an overhaul to warrant any more sequels beyond 2012. If nothing more, at

least Taito could reinstate the anime sequences that have so lovingly graced the series thus far. Ultimately, though, I think *Psychic Force* needs to move into true 3D, where the characters fly towards and away from the player, to make the grade beyond 2000. ⚡







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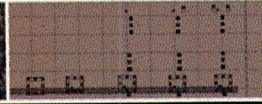
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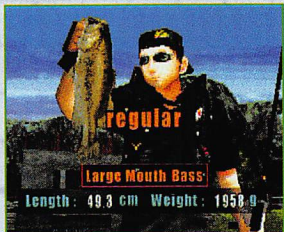
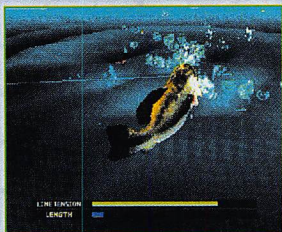
## BASS RISE

• developer/publisher: bandai • available: now

As the industry's reigning virtual bass fishing champion, I've found new life covering bass fishing games. This is a mixed blessing, as I just finished reviewing Bass Rise. With poor graphics and uninspired action, the game seemed to just drag on forever.

In Agetec's Bass Landing, you at least had a sense of arcade excitement and could choose the exact spot where the cast would land, as well as how to cast (overhand, sidearm or skipping it), but with Bass Rise, you don't get the blood flowing nor do you have much freedom of control in casting.

On the plus side, the sound effects—both above and below the surface—do create a nice sense of environment, and there is an impressive rippling effect to the water when pulling the fish out. But for the most part, Bass Rise just doesn't seem to hook you in. 🐾

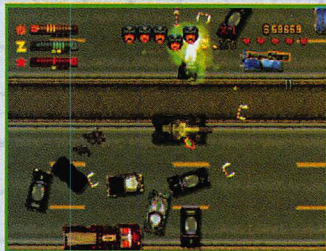


## GRAND THEFT AUTO 2

• developer: dma designs • publisher: rockstar • available: now

With all the censorship and fear of releasing games with controversial content, it is nice to know there are some companies that aren't concerned with feeding the trends. Rockstar's latest is a perfect example of this, and their wantonly violent sequel is evil enjoyment. The first big change are the expansive environments. No more are the neverending intersections tying together a loose city. Now the metro areas you run amok in have distinct districts. There is also a gang system, which involves you choosing objectives ordered by different gangs. Follow through with a series of requests by a particular gang and you will gain increased support and larger cuts of money. On the flip side, rival gangs will start running more focused hits on ending

your choice of loyalty. It feels uneasy repeating a series of car-jackings in order to fulfill even more corrupt instructions to beat the game, but then again, games are supposed to take us into fantasy worlds where the consequences of our actions don't dictate our utter fates—in which case don't just jack the car; bust a cap in the fool's ass, too. 🗡️



## WU TANG

• developer: paradox • publisher: activision • available: now

Sweet Baby Jesus! He just tore Inspectah Deck's head off! Of course, he's more commonly known as Ol' Dirty Bastard to those outside the rap world and he and the rest of the Killa Bees are ready to scrap inside your living room. Now, if you have no interest in the Wu-Tang Clan, their music or their visions in a game crafted to their likes, then... forget you. To everyone else, get ready for a game that's just as addicting as black tar heroin. Or so I've been told.

All jokes aside, this game continues the evolution of the fighting genre. From the moment the intro to the game starts, it is obvious that the developers have much respect for Wu-Tang and vice versa because the Clan cut and produced tracks exclusively for the game. Even the prerendered sequences are tight, sporting a look like the comic book series.

Characters go toe-to-toe, knuckled-up or with a variety of traditional martial arts weapons. Each uses a specific fighting style and all of them are balanced extremely well, making it fun to jump around trying new fighters. During a one-player game, your fighter enters a series of chambers where you must prevail against anywhere from three lowly minions to one badass boss.

The fight controls are familiar: a button press combined with any particular direction will result in a variety of different attacks. Chaining these together is simple as well. In no time, you will start understanding moves that link into juggle moves allowing you to score 15-

hit combos and higher. When the victor delivers the final blow, the action stops and the camera circles around in the vein of *The Matrix*. During this time, she/he can enter a final move, resulting in an ultra-gory or relatively funny end-fight sequence.

The four-player games are the main draw; not surprisingly, these are the most entertaining bouts. It is fair to say that the Wu-Tang label is either going to help or hurt the sale of this game, depending on who you are. For me, I am excited that not only is there a game with Method Man, but that it is worth my dollar, dollar bills. 🗡️





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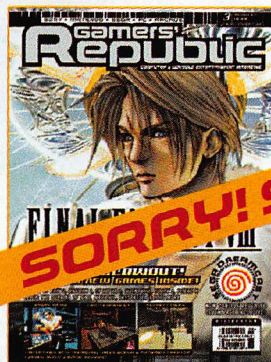
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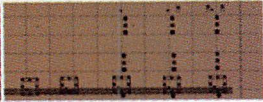
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## 40 WINKS

• developer: eurocom • publisher: gt interactive • available: now

In the vein of Little Nemo, 40 Winks is a 3D platformer set entirely in a series of dream/nightmare worlds, ranging from outer space to underwater. You can choose to play as Ruff or Tumble, a boy and girl whose mission it is to save the 40 Furby-like Winks from being turned into nasty green Hood-Winks by an evil insomniac old man named Nitekap.

It's fairly straightforward as far as gameplay goes—think Spyro hubs with Mario play mechanics and item collecting, and you're not far off—with colorful levels and mostly cute, fanciful enemies, as well as smooth-running mini-races. You also have the Kid Chameleon-like ability to change into other forms, like ninjas and jesters. Although the game's target is children, it is actually quite fun to play, and a solid 3D platformer. For taking place in dreams, it's a shame that 40 Winks can't be more like my dreams; I mean, Sarah Michelle Gellar is nowhere to be found. ☹



## SHADOW TOWER

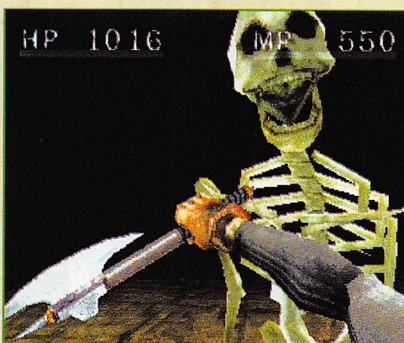
• developer: from software • publisher: agetec • available: now

The only reason I can think of why a new game in the King's Field RPG series is being released is because of its weapon, items and magic system, which can be best described as pure, statistical, and plentiful. Graphically, the game is a pixelated eyesore. And I love RPGs, but this first-person perspective gameplay is laborious and boring.

On a couple of side notes, the soundtrack is...oh, wait, there is no soundtrack. There are voice samples for the few

NPCs encountered, but each voice sounds so odd and out of place, it's rather amusing.

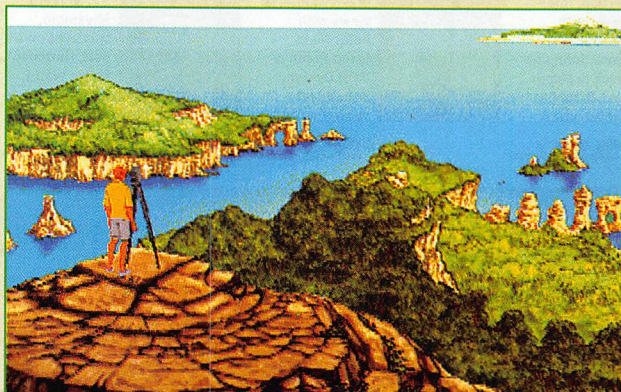
Interestingly enough, the game is similar to Pokémon in that there are 150 different monsters that you can collect in a database and use in a two-player versus game. Even though the control in the two-player game is as horrendous as the graphics in the single player game (possibly worse), I bumped up the grade a half notch for the effort. 🐾



## BROKEN SWORD 2

• developer: revolution software • publisher: crave • available: now

Broken Sword II: The Smoking Mirror is a point-and-click animated adventure game, and with the hundreds of polygonal and 3D games coming to our office every year, this interactive cartoon was a refreshing change of pace.



The content is non-violent, the animation is beautiful, the soundtrack is quite impressive, the voice acting is palatable and the intercontinental-flavored story is interesting.

Unfortunately, the game trudges along with unexciting, linear gameplay and far too much time spent sitting through blank loading screens between each scene. Additionally, sometimes the items that were needed to progress further in the game were so inconspicuous that I thought that they weren't even there at all—I found them only after slowly moving the cursor across the whole screen.



I quite enjoyed the little splashes of humor spread throughout the adventure, as well as being able to control a cartoon. But the slow pace and lackluster gameplay isn't for everyone and unfortunately position the game as just a bit too average. 🐾





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NINTENDO 64



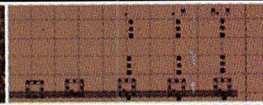
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## DUKES OF HAZZARD—RACING FOR HOME

• developer: sinister games • publisher: southpeak • available: now

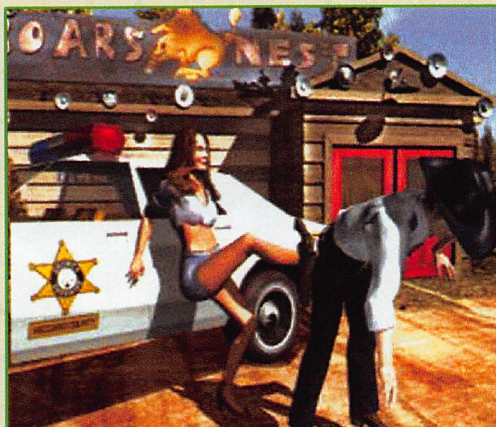


Dukes of Hazzard—Racing for Home is one of the best bad games I've ever played. It fails on multiple levels, yet I have to admit I was somewhat drawn to its goofiness and great character.

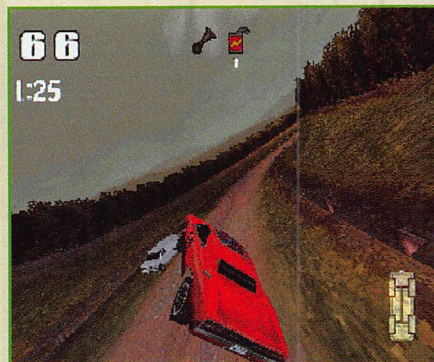
If, like me, you were guiltily entertained by the sublime innocence of *The Dukes of Hazard*, you too might find yourself playing this game and enjoying its amusing faithfulness to that early-80s series. The game is staged like an episode, with a story that unfolds through lengthy CG cut scenes that play at the end of each mission and are voiced by original cast members the likes of Ben Jones (Cooter Davenport), James Best (Roscoe P. Coltrane), and Tom Wopat (Luke Duke). The music, provided by The Tractors, is guaranteed to bring a smile to your face; I'm not certain, but I'd say this is the first video game to feature twangy guitar melodies backed by a banjo.

As Dukes of Hazzard begins, you drive the chunky General Lee through a rather crude representation of the countryside of Hazzard County, and as the game comes to an end, you're still driving through that same monotone countryside. A number of times you'll take control of other vehicles, such as Boss Hogg's convertible and Cooter's tow truck, usually trying to outrun a pursuant or haphazardly ram another vehicle enough times that it becomes incapacitated. During these chases, the opposing vehicles are so manic in their effort that sometimes they flip wildly out of control for no apparent reason—which is something you'll do much of yourself, thanks to the ridiculously exaggerated collision physics and loose control.

Even when Dukes of Hazzard is at its worst, it at least made me laugh. Consider when Luke Duke leans out of the side of the General Lee to extend his bow and arrow to awkwardly target, say, a still. The animation and sound and polygonal model are amusingly bad, and when the General Lee is impacted by a pursuant, the little Luke Duke violently snaps back into the car. There's much more ineptitude where that came from, but with such a wealth of personality, I just can't seem to dislike this game as much as I should. ☼



Any game with a rendered sheriff Roscoe P. Coltrane can't be a total loss.



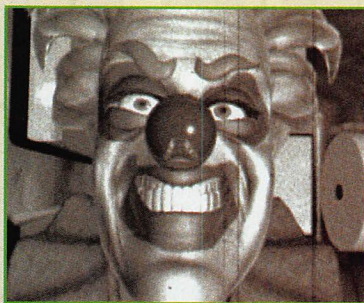
## TWISTED METAL 4

• developer/publisher: 989 studios • available: now

Twisted Metal 4 is a lot like its precursors, in that you drive all sorts of heavily armed vehicles in a tournament in which the ultimate goal is to destroy your multiple opponents by any means possible. And it's most like Twisted Metal 3, in that it's not very good.

Part of Twisted Metal 4's problem is that it comes off as a sloppy effort in nearly every area of its design. The most immediate turnoff is the game's deflated presentation. The Twisted Metal games have never been about good looks, but with so many recent games mining the PlayStation for all its worth, TM4's dull and muddy environments—a trademark for this series—don't cut it, and the design-by-numbers level layout does nothing to promote an engaging experience.

There is a strong foundation of gameplay elements that have carried over from the far-superior Twisted Metal 2, and driving around wildly in search of the likes of a station wagon or garbage truck can at times generate a charge. But even when you start to enjoy the combat, the game finds some way to knock itself off track. If the grating music doesn't get to you, the miscalculated Sweet Tooth bedroom level—how out of place it is to have a Hot-Wheels-inspired level in a Twisted Metal game—will be more than enough to show that this series has seen better days. ☼





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## Q\*BERT

• developer: artech studios • publisher: hasbro interactive • available: now

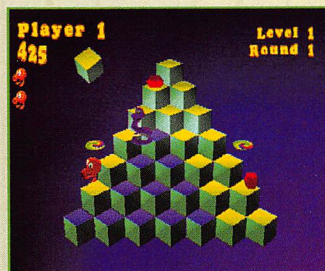
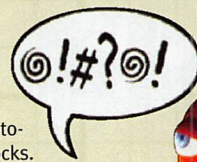
Back in the day, when I'd go to Cal Skate on a Friday night to roller-skate and the DJ would announce, "The next skate is ladies' choice..." and I would get shunned by all the girls, Q\*Bert was always there to ease the pain. Now, Hasbro is releasing my orange, armless, tube-nosed old friend in a triple package: the 1983 arcade game, with both the original graphics as well as a makeover of the classic; new puzzle boards under the guise of Adventure mode; and a multi-faceted head-to-head mode.

QB harks back to the days between the 2600 and the NES—when the arcade was king—but it still holds its own against the puzzle games released today. Although the pseudo-3D, pyramid-board graphics were cutting edge back then, they pale in comparison to modern games. Still, Artech has done a fairly decent job in creating this new QB package. Graphically, except for the original version, they've slightly enlarged the characters, shaded and rounded them out, and added a couple of new touches, such as a quick zoom-in to QB when he gets stopped by Coily the bouncing snake, Ugg, Wrongway or the randomly bouncing balls.

In creating the new QB gameplay mode, Artech has spiced up the block-jumping gameplay with the inclusion of bigger boards, over-

worlds with warp pads, fall-away blocks and, in the two-player head-to-head mode, a variety of special blocks.

Overall, the package is pretty well-rounded, with the exception of a stiff control scheme that takes some getting used to, as the PS controller isn't a viable replacement for an arcade joystick. 🐾



## MISSILE COMMAND

• developer: meyer/glass interactive • publisher: hasbro interactive • available: now

The only thing that's constant in life is change, and sometimes it's hard to tell whether the change is good or bad. For instance, take Hasbro Interactive's Missile Command for PlayStation. As was done with the Pong and Q\*Bert titles, the update of Missile Command stays true to the original gameplay, but changes it at the same time.

In addition to a cosmetic makeover to the original arcade classic, there's an almost entirely different game in Ultimate mode. With a sci-fi story—complete with a CG intro and cut scenes—now accompanying the space

shooter, players are thrown into saving the world as the alien attack waves now target cities around the globe.

The MC playing field has been expanded upwards, as well as to the left and the right. This is part of the biggest change in the game: it's no longer a ground-to-air attack game, as the three gunners now move (in unison) up and down and left and right in a limited free space. Another addition is that the points collected are now worth dollars, which can be used to purchase a variety of armaments, such as Titan and Atlas missiles, smart bombs, and shields.

The music and sound effects are bold and the explosions are carried off nicely. Of the three aforementioned

updated games, all which lose some control in the translation, I most miss the original MC arcade trackball.

MC isn't a really bad game, it's just not a really good one either. 🐾



## PONG

• developer: supersonic • publisher: hasbro interactive • available: now

As a member of the very first generation of video gamers—the Pong generation—upon receiving the assignment to review Hasbro's update of the classic Pong game, I was skeptical. I mean, come on: it's Pong. How varied can you get with video table tennis? And how would it play in 3D?

Well, I'm pleased to report that Supersonic has developed quite an enjoyable title, with 20 different variations on the granddaddy of all video games. Not all of them are engaging, but the majority are, with a variety of competitive table tennis matches against the CPU, as well as solo tests of ball-bouncing acumen. And nearly every stage can be played as a multiplayer game.

The game's variety comes in the table designs, the use of obstacles, the inclusion of power-ups, color schemes, and double paddles—there's even a fishing game. There's one game where, if you grab the power-up, you can tilt the table to your opponent's side for a limited

time. The paddle-handling skills are especially tested in the solo games, including a humorous stage where you hit sheep and lambs with the ball in order to herd them into the middle of a circular platform; let one stray and it falls off the edge!

On a couple of down notes, the PS controller just doesn't move the paddle as swift as the old knob controller, and the constant swaying of the tables is sometimes annoying. But all in all, this is a solid conversion. By the way, the original Pong is included. 🐾





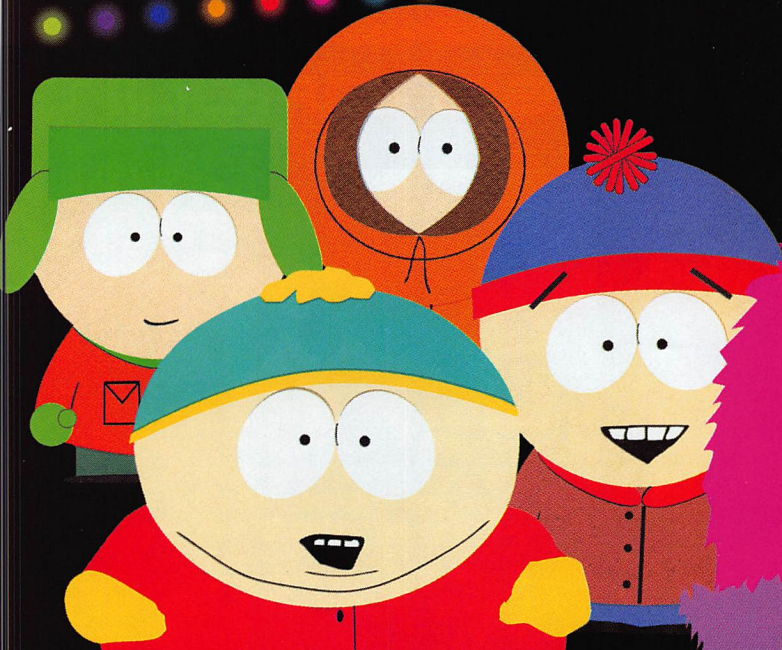
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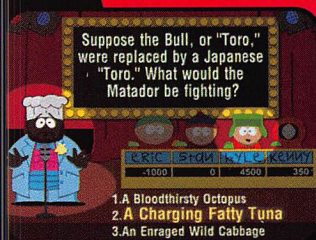
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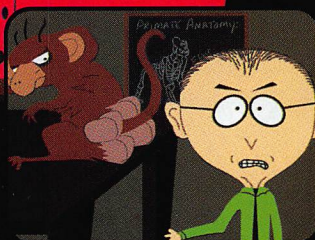
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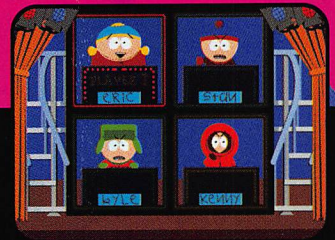
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# DIRTY GAMES

## THE FIRST ANNUAL GR MOTOCROSS SHOOTOUT

BY DAVE HALVERSON



**W**ith motocross and now freestyle motocross gaining popularity among mainstream America thanks to the continued growth of Xtreme sports and network TV, motocross games are finally getting the respect they deserve. Before the genre grows further, I thought it might be fun to have a look at the category past and present, as this year's models will likely serve as the catalyst for motocross games to come.

## 989 SUPERCROSS CIRCUIT

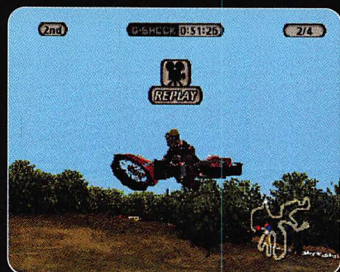
PUBLISHER: 989 STUDIOS DEVELOPER: IDOL MINDS PLATFORM: PLAYSTATION

989's entry into the motocross fray is the clear winner for motocross game of the year. The beauty of this game lies in the combination of the throttle blip and the realistic behind-the-bars or head cam, not to mention the authentic course design in the indoor and outdoor venues, which is superb. Supercross Circuit is also the only game to take you all the way through a very realistic racing career, from the local rankings into the Supercross series and finally into the outdoor and then 250 venues. Let me warn you though: this game's prowess isn't instantly recognizable. You need to really dial in the controls before you can appreciate it. First, practice your launching skills by blipping the throttle at the peak of jumps, steep hills and out-of-corners. Then—and trust me on this one—wire racing with the head cam. Once you dial in these aspects, this is as close to real racing as any game will ever take you. Oh, you might want to tone down the speed metal, too, because you can actually purchase the Yamaha YZ 426F that Doug Henry rides once

you hit 250, and that throaty four stroke thump is just too cool.

Supercross Circuit even allows you to take practice laps before each race, just like the real thing, and during practice, the stadium is very sporadically populated, adding to the sense of really participating in a Supercross event. The physics also are very good, albeit almost too forgiving, and you get to choose your seven opponents from a roster of who's who in professional motocross. As for the game's balance, it's so on-the-money that it's almost scary. A bevy of tricks can be easily pulled off by pressing R2 and a direction while flying, and then later in the game's excellent replay mode, which allows you to slow-mo or freeze the action, you can view your handywork as you scrutinize the entire race.

Supercross Circuit also takes the checkered in terms of bike tuning. Your bike takes on real wear and tear, so you must replace and upgrade parts throughout. But spend too much of your winnings, and when you finally reach the 250 class, you won't have enough cash for a bike, and it's back to the 125 circuit to earn more dinero! And, finally, when the day is done, you can sit back and build courses with the intuitive track editor. This one truly has it all.



*The head cam really puts you in the heat of the action. It takes awhile to get used to, but it's worth the effort (pictured right). After catching mad air you can freeze it in the replay and view your handywork (left).*

GAME ENGINE: 9 SIM ASPECTS: 9 COURSE DESIGN: 10  
CONTROL: 8 REPLAYS: 9 OPTIONS: 10 REPLAYABILITY: 9  
STYLE POINTS: 7 MULTIPLAYER: 8 AUDIO: 9



# EA SUPERCROSS 2000

PUBLISHER/DEVELOPER: ELECTRONIC ARTS PLATFORM: NINTENDO 64

Coming off of 98's Supercross Circuit, EA's Supercross 2000 is a completely different animal, although it's a great game in its own right. Harnessing a smooth 3D engine that emphasizes physics over speed, S2000 offers up 16 authentically designed stadium venues, a full roster of professional racers, and more available camera angles than any other two games combined. It also has the best replay function I have ever laid hands on, providing *Matrix*-like camera manipulation and literally every possible angle imaginable.

Supercross 2000 is also the only Motocross game to employ a clutch mechanism that figures into each race as much or more than any other control item on the menu. Here's how it all works. First of all, S2000's bikes have extremely realistic suspension and pitch. Basically, if you spring out of a turn with a throttle blast, the bike is going to go exactly the way that gravity intends, so you must always be aware of what lies ahead and adjust accordingly, pointing and compensating just right to stay on course. This is hard to grasp for a few minutes as you learn the limitations and nuances of throttle versus physics, but once you do, it makes controlling S2000 a very rewarding experience. Using the clutch is equally challenging. Power into a turn and simply hammer right or left on the analog and you've got problems. Instead, you must pull in the clutch (located nicely on the Z trigger, Nintendo's gift to game pad design), negotiate the arc of the turn, and then either pop it for a burst out of the turn, or feather it for long, wide turns. Again, at first it's a little weird, but once you dial it in, you'll see the wisdom in it.

In the simulation department, once entrenched in a season of S2000, you can adjust your bike's traction, suspen-

sion and power curve, although the terrain throughout the game is so similar, it's really a matter of finding a comfort zone and sticking with it as you make your way through the beginner, rookie, and finally pro ranks.

In the beginner ranks, invisible walls are turned on, so it's not possible to go off course. In the rookie and pro venues, however, exercise caution, because you crash a lot easier, and if you head off course, they will yellow-flag you and set you back at the point you strayed. You can take practice laps all you want before the season starts, but once it does, there are none pre-moto, so it's best to take a couple of laps on each once you turn pro to see where the tricky parts are.

EA's game also has a very good, albeit somewhat repetitive, commentator that you can substitute for music—although the music in the game, while overly populated with token punk tunes and speed metal, is very good.

While Supercross 2000 lacks the diversity found in Supercross Circuit, it provides a completely different atmosphere and control scheme—so much so that owning both is really the way to go, unless you only own a Nintendo 64, in which case this is the game for you.

GAME ENGINE: 9 SIM ASPECTS: 9 COURSE DESIGN: 8  
CONTROL: 8 REPLAYS: 10 OPTIONS: 8 REPLAYABILITY: 8  
STYLE POINTS: 8 MULTIPLAYER: 8 AUDIO: 8

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## ELECTRONIC ARTS





# RICKY C CHAMPIONSHIP MX

PUBLISHER: THQ DEVELOPER: FUNCOM PLATFORM: PLAYSTATION

The press release reads, "The gates have dropped." Funny, because there aren't any starting gates in Championship Motocross featuring Ricky Carmichael (which we will refer to from here on out as SMfRC). And herein lies the problem. This game is named improperly, in that it's not really a motocross game but rather a fantasy enduro/motocross game (known as Dirt) that Funcom tweaked (so they could sell it in the we-won't-buy-it-unless-it's-got-a-license U.S.) in to the closest thing they could...which ain't even close. Not that this is a tragedy or anything, SMfRC is an okay game when viewed strictly as an off-road racer. The courses are wide and slippery, and there are now no berms, although they are laid out well, especially in the later seasons. Also, the frame rate is always respectable. The sim

aspects, however, are quite poor. The starts are pretty unrealistic, and the first-turn adrenaline rush is nonexistent. Landing jumps is haphazard as well. Some of the jumps send you into a seemingly gravity-less descent, and no matter how you adjust in the air (which you're in way too long), sometimes you bail, and sometimes you don't.

More no-nos include no retry feature (in case you beef and really need to restart) and there's no between-race save available, so should you have a bad run in mid-season, it's back to the beginning. Arggh! Perhaps the funniest mishap however is Funcom's attempt at a stadium track: picture a stadium that's, oh, I don't know, as big as LAX, and is always flat with the crowd, like, 100 yards away all the time. One must question why they even tried. Those crowds are weird, too. During an enduro deep in the woods, you'll hear hundreds cheering you. Where are they? On the plus side, the game has nice sound effects, loads of speed metal and the ability to turn it off, good bike models, and markedly improved gameplay in the 250 and 500cc classes—a good pay off for hanging in through the 125cc ranks. You can also tweak your bike for varying conditions.

The highlight of SMfRC is in the enduro tracks, riding the 250 and 500cc bikes, and the cool roosts you can throw in the sand! In the trick department, they're easy enough to pull off, but look pretty lame.

GAME ENGINE: 7 SIM-ASPECTS: 4 COURSE DESIGN: 7  
CONTROL: 6 REPLAYS: 2 OPTIONS: 6 REPLAYABILITY: 6  
STYLE POINTS: 5 MULTI-PLAYER: 7 AUDIO: 7

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# TOP GEAR HYPERBIKE

PUBLISHER: KEMCO DEVELOPER: SNOWBLIND PLATFORM: NINTENDO 64

Top Gear Hyperbike really doesn't quite fit into either the motocross or road-racing genres, as both venues in the game have little in the way of simulation aspects. Then again, I don't think it's trying to be a hard-core sim. Think of Hyperbike as TG Rally with cycles. It's a well-tuned racer aimed squarely at the steer, brake and fly arcade gamer. In the off-road portions, the riders look a little on the large side, even on the bigger bikes, and rider animation is pretty stiff with all the physics of a weeble. It doesn't matter using the head cam, but Hyperbike's pretty mediocre. The bike only leans, so there's no pivot point on the forks to provide that connectivity you get with Supercross Circuit. Control-wise, it's pretty much point and go. Collect nitros, use them often, and master the shortcuts, and you'll be home in no time. Tricks are easily performed, only they're done so with the same button as the brake, which can cause some accidental crashes when pitching it sideways on a bumpy trail. On the road-race side—the game's strong suit—things are much better, although the steering radius does seem overly wide. To negotiate even semi-tight turns, you need to brake and skid to get the bike pointed in the right direction. Like I said, TGH is an arcade

racer through and through. The game's 3D engine is probably its strongest suit, with astounding draw-in distance and a hires mode that hits the impressive frame rate very little.

In terms of its motocross aspects, well, there really aren't many. The stadiums are way off base (merely smaller tracks with a repeating flat stadium background), and you can pretty much gas it all the way around them. You also start alone in single file and seldom duke it out with any riders; you're either catching them or passing them, so hit those nitros! This one's for the all-around racing fan, and definitely not for players looking for a motocross or road-racing sim.



GAME ENGINE: 8 SIM-ASPECTS: 4 COURSE DESIGN: 7  
CONTROL: 5 REPLAYS: 1 OPTIONS: 7 REPLAYABILITY: 6  
STYLE POINTS: 3 MULTI-PLAYER: 7 AUDIO: 7

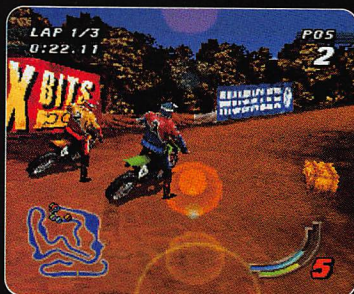
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# JEREMY McGRATH '98

PUBLISHER: PROBE DEVELOPER: ACCLAIM PLATFORM: PLAYSTATION



At first glance, with one rider on the track or in screen shots (it also helps if you're nearsighted), Jeremy McGrath '98 doesn't look half bad. But get a few other riders on the track and you've got a shuddering mess you don't want to be anywhere near. Making matters worse is the control, which I can only liken to racing on ice, and the announcer spews such lame remarks that I want to crawl inside the game and beat the s@%\$ out of him. It's funny really: Jeremy slapped his name on this sucker and it sold a ton of copies, helping spark the current MX explosion. To those of you who bought JM '98, I can only offer this: When you play Supercross Circuit you will feel truly spoiled and, before you buy Jeremy's 2000 model, make sure you have a look at my review. If you'd have read it last year you would have saved 50 bucks.

GAME ENGINE: 4 SIM ASPECTS: 2 COURSE DESIGN: 5  
CONTROL: 4 REPLAYS: 0 OPTIONS: 5 REPLAYABILITY: 0  
STYLE POINTS: 1 MULTIPLAYER: 3 AUDIO: 2

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## VMX

PUBLISHER: PLAYMATES DEVELOPER: STUDIO E PLATFORM: PLAYSTATION

I guess we had to start somewhere. If there's one thing that VMX racing teaches us, it's that we've come a long way. Believe it or not (and I'd prefer you didn't), there was a time when I actually liked this game. That's how hard-up I was for anything resembling a motocross game back in '97. But playing it now, evaluating it versus games that are only two years older, I am amazed at

how far developers have stretched the limitations of the PlayStation. This game has no meat on its bones, offering no season or championship to speak of, and has next to no options: it's little more than an exercise in steering. Riders don't put their foot out around turns, touching the side of the track (which is just a line) causes an instant crash, and the announcer says some truly asinine things. It was okay three years ago, but VMX racing is a game best forgotten.

GAME ENGINE: 4 SIM ASPECTS: 1 COURSE DESIGN: 5  
CONTROL: 4 REPLAYS: 4 OPTIONS: 5 REPLAYABILITY: 2  
STYLE POINTS: 5 MULTIPLAYER: 4 AUDIO: 4

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## DIRT TRAX

PUBLISHER: ACCLAIM DEVELOPER: SOFTWARE SCULPTORS PLATFORM: SNES

The first attempt ever at a polygon-pushing motocross game was Software Sculptures Dirt Trax, released in 1995 by Acclaim. At the time, 3D was barely a notion, and so the SNES faithful, me included, were quite thrilled. The game didn't hold a candle to Nintendo's own Stunt Trax, which is still a gas to play to this day, but it did pave the polygonal way. Playing Dirt Trax now is not as laborious a task as I thought it might be. Sure, the sprite-based riders look pretty hokey and the frame rate hovers at around 17-20 fps, but the game still has that pioneer feel and charm. The only fair way to rate Dirt Trax within this feature is to adjust the numbers relative to the vast leap in technology and the system it was designed for. As scary as this may sound, I'd rather play this game than VMX or McGrath '98.



GAME ENGINE: 7 SIM ASPECTS: 5 COURSE DESIGN: 6  
CONTROL: 7 REPLAYS: 0 OPTIONS: 7 REPLAYABILITY: 7  
STYLE POINTS: 6 MULTIPLAYER: 7 AUDIO: 5

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## JEREMY McGRATH 2000

PUBLISHER/DEVELOPER: ACCLAIM PLATFORM: DREAMCAST/N64



Will Jeremy McGrath take seriously the latest game to carry his name? Does he actually know what makes a good video game? Find out the answers to these questions and more when we preview Jeremy McGrath Supercross 2000 in an upcoming issue. It's the first motocross game to hit

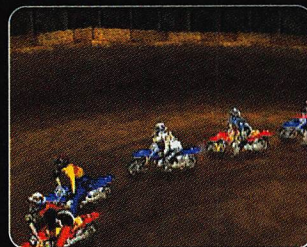
Dreamcast, so I have very high hopes, although the fact that all they have thus far is one doctored screen shot does not fare well for a release anywhere in the near future. Hey, just so it's good, take all the time you need.

## EXCITEBIKE

PUBLISHER: NINTENDO DEVELOPER: LEFT FIELD PLATFORM: NINTENDO 64

I view this one as a guaranteed winner. In fact, Excitebike will likely set the benchmark for all motocross games to come, as Wave Race 64 did for water sports. Under development from Left Field, one of three first-party Nintendo developers, using of course, only the finest tools available, Excitebike

promises ground-breaking physics, an unprecedented track editor, and full season racing both indoors and out. Judging by the video we've seen of the game in action, Excitebike is definitely the one to watch in 2000.





# MILLENNIUM SPECIAL

THERE'S A SIMPLE REASON WHY WE AT GAMERS' REPUBLIC DEDICATE OUR LIVES TO PLAYING VIDEO GAMES: WE LOVE EVERY SINGLE THING ABOUT THEM. WE THOUGHT LONG AND HARD ON HOW TO RING IN THE NEW, BIGGEST NEW YEAR OF OUR GENERATION, AND CONCLUDED THAT THIS WOULD BE A GOOD OPPORTUNITY TO GIVE OUR READERS SOME INSIGHT ON WHAT DROVE US TO GAMING AS A LIFESTYLE. SO WITH-  
OUT FURTHER ADDO, HERE'S A VIDEO GAME TIMELINE AS SEEN THROUGH THE EYES OF THE EDITORS OF GAMERS' REPUBLIC...

## Atari 2600

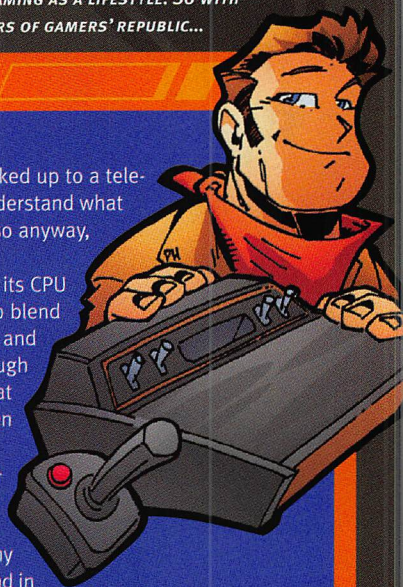
By Mike Hobbs

I recall vividly going over to a friend's house as a wee one and seeing a 2600 hooked up to a television. I immediately reached for this strange looking hunk of plastic, bursting to understand what it did. My mother admonished me not to touch this strange, alien device, but I did so anyway, and that was the start of a long and beautiful friendship with console video games.

For an idea of just how primitive the 2600 was compared to the systems of today, its CPU ran at just over 1 mhz, the original model had fake wood-grain detailing (perhaps to blend with green shag carpeting) and a switch on the system for selecting between black and white and color televisions. But this was the first successful console system, and though the games don't hold up today at all, I'll never forget multiplayer sessions of Combat and Boxing and, of course, Activision's Pitfall, River Raid, and Night Driver. I even enjoyed archaic versions of Q\*Bert and Pac-Man.

The 2600 deserves its place in history, even if it almost killed the very console gaming market that it helped to create. Perhaps the most infamous example of this was Atari's supposed manufacturing of more E.T. cartridges than there were systems, and those unsold cartridges remain buried somewhere out in the desert (next to Jimmy Hoffa). And I recall the flood of cheap games after the so-called video-game crash, and in my shortsighted, youthful ways, I could think of nothing better than having a grocery bag full of cartridges for ten dollars.

After the 2600, I piddled around with 5200 and oddities like the Vectrex, but it was Nintendo and the NES that got me firmly involved with gaming for life, as that system was truly ready for prime time.



AKA: Atari VCS CPU: 6507 RAM: 128 Bytes, in VLSI ROM: 4K max Cpu Clock: 1.19 MHz Graphics Clock: 1.19 MHz Slot Config: Rom access only CPU Avail: less than 50% Media: EPROM cartridges Cartridge RAM: 64K max

## Atari 7800

Considered Atari's attempt to battle the NES, the so-called 7800 was a simple case of too little, too late. Notable for its backward compatibility with most 2600 games and a slew of fairly good arcade conversions (thanks to the system's MARIA graphics chip), it had basically no chance of competing against the likes of Super Mario Bros and Kung-Fu. Part of the problem was the age of the system before it even came out. The 7800 hardware was supposedly finished in 1984, but it wasn't until 1986 that Atari thought they knew what to do with it. Imagine if the Genesis or PlayStation had come out two whole years after they had been ready for release. Yes, the 7800 was doomed before it ever left the gate.

## Atari 5200

By Dave Halverson

It was 1982 and one of the happiest birthdays I can remember. For once I got what I wanted—a shiny new Atari 5200. Having had no interest in the 2600 (for some reason its budge graphics just couldn't pry me from the BMX saddle) this was the console that would propel me into gaming. I remember turning out all of the lights in my room that first night and playing Pac Man until I could no longer fight sleep and thinking, Oh my god, how could it ever get any better than this? Then came Buck Rogers and Gyruss and I went into sensory overload. I was hooked, a gamer for life. My friends had Colecovision and some lame monkey game (boy, that thing didn't go anywhere), but I didn't care because I had Atari, so I ruled. My defining moments were standing in the aisles of Toys 'R' Us reading flaps, and playing Moon Patrol, Vanguard, Tempest, Dig Dug, and Joust. If I could mention only one it would be Moon Patrol. All of those games are etched into my memory forever. Not just the games, but the era, where I was, and who I was with.

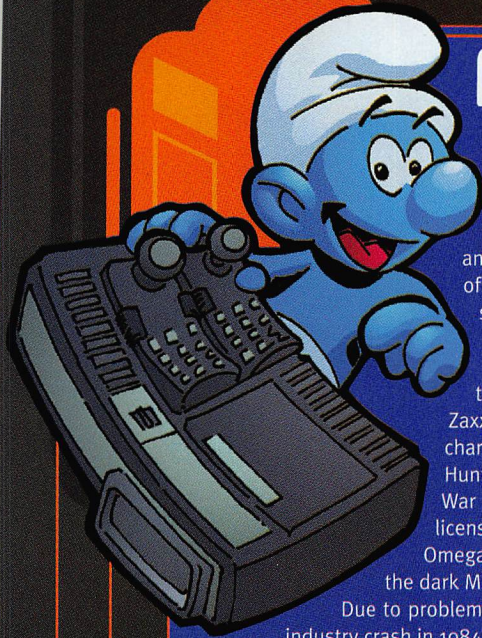
CPU: 6502C + 3 Custom VLSIs Clock Speed: 1.78 Mhz Graphics chip: ANTIC Graphics Clock: 1.78 MHz Colors: 256, 16 on-screen Resolution: 320x192 Sound chip: POKEY Sound channels: 4 RAM: 16K BIOS: 2K Power Supply: 4-Port, 11.5VDC





# Colecovision

By Tom Stratton



Renowned as the only home console system to have an adapter, let alone a licensed one, to play Atari 2600 games, the Colecovision provided the equivalent in look, control and reproduction of an arcade game. Getting exclusive console rights for Donkey Kong from Nintendo and having the adapter that enabled Atari 2600 games meant Coleco had all of the hot developers programming games that could be played on their system. The sleek hardware even had a nice controller casket, where one could neatly place their controllers once done playing.

The greats of games today were just as memorable on the Coleco. It was the only system to play arcade translations like Sega's isometric classic Zaxxon, Shigeru Miyamoto's Donkey Kong (the debut of gaming's greatest characters and the original platform game), Tapper, Popeye, Venture, Spy Hunter, Gorf, Choplifter and Frontline. Some of the best original titles were War Games, Rocky Super Action Boxing (yes, even then, there were movie licenses), Super Action Baseball (complete with Super Action Controller), Omega Race (the personal favorite of our XO, who played it many a time through the dark Midwestern nights), Wing War and Lady Bug.

Due to problems surrounding the faulty Adam computer Coleco released later, and the industry crash in 1984, the Colecovision suffered a premature death, and of course, the Coleco toy company didn't survive for long afterwards. However, it was not before arguably the greatest licensed property of all time became one of the greatest games of its age. We speak, of course, of a crew that are only just now returning to video gaming, doubtless because they felt that only in this age of nonstop technical innovation could their past exploits be topped. We speak, of course, of the Smurfs.

CPU: Z-80A Bit Depth: 8 Clock Speed: 3.58 MHz RAM: 8K Video RAM: 16K VDP: TI TMS9928A Resolution: 256 x 192 Sprites: 32 Colors: 16 Sound Chip: TI SN76489AN Channels: 3 TONE, 1 NOISE.

# Intellivision

By J.R. Haugen

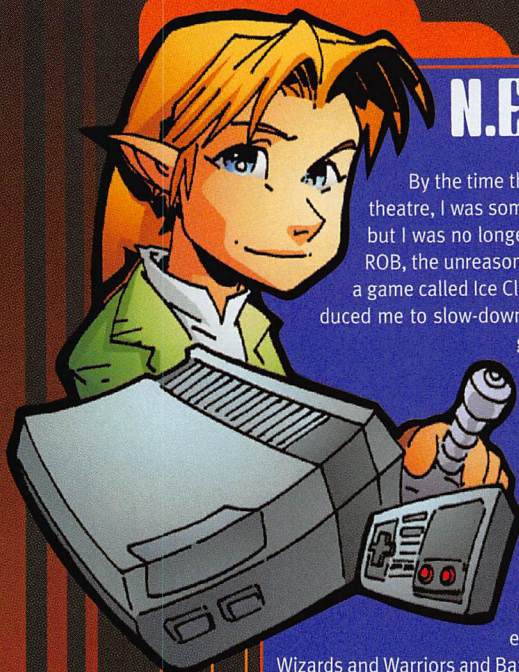
There are two products involving discs I am fond of that lasted only a short time on the market. The first is my ill-fated pair of Puma Discs, which somehow met an ignominious fate in an icy northern Wisconsin waterfall. The second, whose destiny was slightly less...improbable, is the Intellivision. Or should I say Intellivision I, Intellivision II, and Intellivision III. I had all three of them, which only attests to the system's greatness. Sure, everyone else had the Atari 2600 and the Colecovision, but only I had Intellivision, the system no one had even heard of, the system with the best version of Kool-Aid Man. It had rectangular paddles with numeric keypads, side buttons, and discs for control. Discs! Before I was ever introduced to the marvels of 8-bit gaming, the Intellivision is what consumed all of my free time, whether playing or just watching someone else play. The games, although quite basic, were totally engrossing. It was the most tense of situations when my brother finally got up to the guys wielding pain sticks in Tron: Deadly Discs, and the occasional big red Recognizer was fiercely intimidating.

Even the learning games were gripping: I can still remember the music from Electric Company Word Fun. Then, of course, there was the glorious Intellivoice unit, which always chimed in with foreign-sounding phrases in a select few games like B-17 Bomber and Bomb Squad ("You'll neverrr do eet een tiiliime!"). There are dozens of games I could play right now and call better than much of what is being offered in the 32-bit realm: Shark! Shark!, Snafu, Fathom, both Advanced Dungeons & Dragons games, Congo Bongo, Lock 'N' Chase, Microsurgeon, Ice Trek (caribou!), Dragonfire, and many more; my mind simply boggles at the notion! I still haven't found out why the Intellivision II looked so radically different from the other two, but that simply adds to the system's legacy. Nowadays, with classic Intellivision games on PC and PlayStation, everyone who missed out in the early to mid-80s will be able to enjoy and continue the seeming fairy-tale story of the greatest disc-controller system there ever was, and ever will be.



CPU: GI C161D Bit Depth: 16 System RAM: GI RA-3-9600 VDP: GI AY-3-8900-1 Sound Chip: GI AY-3-8914 Channels: 3 GRAM: 64 PROGRAM-DEFINED 8 x 8 IMAGES GROM: 213 PRE-DEFINED 8 x 8 IMAGES EXEC ROM: 4K Static RAM: 256 8-BIT LOCATIONS





## N.E.S. By Dave Halverson

By the time the NES came along, having been burned too many times by Atari and their bad game theatre, I was somewhat jaded and had moved out of gaming as a religion. I still played for recreation, but I was no longer on a first-name basis with the guy at Toys 'R' Us. However, once I figured out that ROB, the unreasonable robot that came packed with the NES, was an evil piece of plastic, and I got into a game called Ice Climber, I was back. Now this was gaming bliss—full on, next level stuff. The NES introduced me to slow-down, flicker, and the most fun I'd ever had indoors. This would be the re-emergence of gaming, and spark the industry that has gone on to become larger than cinema, my other passion in life. We all owe a huge debt of gratitude to Arakawa and company.

As for defining moments, I could write a novel on my time with the NES, so I'll spare you the drama and just touch on the games that changed my life. Metroid: When I finally burst Mother Brain's bubble and Samus turned out to be a chick...well (and this is the only time I've ever done this), I took a picture of the screen.

Blastar Master: Sunsoft's action/driving-on-the-walls hybrid combined ground-breaking level design, pseudo-isometric gameplay and, although they flickered like a banshee, big bosses. Bionic Commando: Its hard-core action and grappling madness was unforgettable (and it's coming to GBC!) Metal Gear: With its AI and sniping, I don't think any NES owner will ever forget it. I'm going to run out of real estate real quick so here's some of the rest... Contra-Super C, Ninja Gaiden (1,2 & 3),

Wizards and Warriors and Battletoads (Rare was already ahead of there time), all the Castlevania games (but especially CV3), Faxanadu, Crystalis, Batman, Ghosts and Goblins, Karnov, Ikari Warriors, Lifeforce, all the Megaman games, Super Mario Bros. 3, Excitebike, and of course the lord of all NES games, The Legend of Zelda, a game that I voluntarily stayed up for 72 hours at a time playing, holding pee breaks until my bladder about burst. When I found out you could burn the trees, I about died.

Processor: CUSTOM MOTOROLA 6502 Processor Speed: 1.79 MHZ Resolution: 256X240 Color Palette: 52 Colors on Screen: 16 Max Sprites: 64 Max Sprites per Line: 8 Sprite Size: 8X8 OR 8X16 Picture Scroll: 2 H/V RAM: 2 KB

## Sega Master System By Dave Halverson

I already had a NES and was well on my way to becoming an apt video game player. I still died a lot (in games, I'm not a vampire), but I could beat even the hardest games, although it sometimes took days. Hey, I'm man enough to admit it; we all sucked once. Initially I was somewhat disenchanted with the Master System's software lineup. Double Dragon on the NES had vertical elements and a jump button, but in the SMS game you had to press up to jump (which I hated) and there were no ladders to climb.

But then came a little gem called Phantasy Star. It felt like I was getting sucked in to a parallel universe as I played it, and every time I got to a dungeon (draftsman's pad in tow for drawing maps) I thought I'd struck gold. It was my second big RPG, and I'll never forget it.

The next big milestone for me is something that I own, cherish, and play to this day, and that's the amazing Sega MS 3D goggles. This quality apparatus and a game of Maze Hunter, Zaxxon, or Outrun 3D is all I need for hours of gaming bliss. This was the first sign of my insane love for submersing 3D technology. As you'll read later in the Virtual Boy section, I have an affinity for such things. My defining moments on the SMS came during Phantasy Star, Alex Kidd, Zillion, Rastan, Double Dragon and for the goggles, Zaxxon, Outrun, Space Harrier, and Maze Hunter 3D. If I had to choose one, it would be Maze Hunter. So deep...so very, very deep.

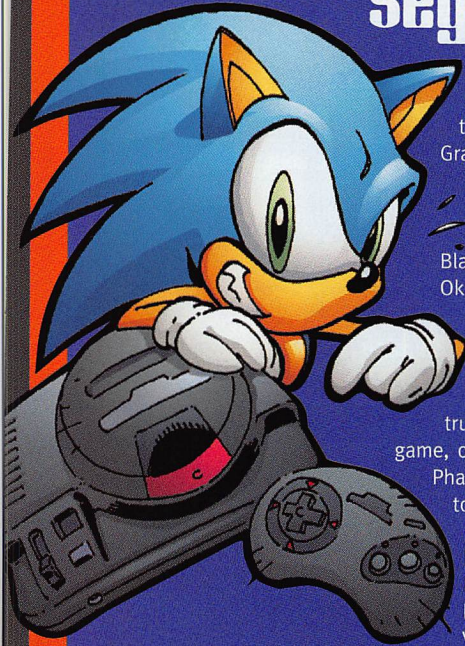


CPU: Z80 @ 3.6 Resolution: 240 X 226 Sprites: 16 Sprite Size: 8 X 8 Colors: 64 ROM: 1024K BITS RAM: 64K BITS Video RAM: 128K BITS Screen Scroll: HORIZONTAL, DIAGONAL, VERTICAL, PARTIAL



# Sega Genesis

By Dave Halverson



Still knee deep in NES games, and happy as a lark, my copy of EGM with the sole existing screen shot of *Altered Beast* in it went everywhere I did. I thought, Could this really, actually, be the game? Waiting for it and the TurboGrafx, which was hot on its heels, seemed to take an eternity. Which one should I buy? Or, should I get a cheaper apartment and buy both? The idea of arcade-perfect games at home danced in my head until that fateful day... I bought my Genesis with three games: *ThunderForce*, *Last Battle*, and *Thunder Blade*. And, of course, it came with the holy grail of video games, *Altered Beast*. Okay, when I saw parallax for the first time that was it—I mean that was really it.

I think I was almost too elated. I played all three of those games until there was no more to play as I waited anxiously for *Forgotten Worlds* and *Rambo III*. From that point there would be many stages in my love for the Genesis and eventual affinity for all that is Sega. The Genesis was the first system to truly evolve over the course of its life. Looking at a first- and fifth- generation game, one would think they were looking at completely different hardware. From *Phantasy Star 2* (my favorite in the series), *Revenge of Shinobi*, and *Moonwalker* to *Son of Chuck*, *Flink*, *Gunstar Heroes*, *Earthworm Jim*, *Landstalker*, and *Ranger-X*, the difference is striking. The Genesis was nothing short of a revelation for me. To list its defining moments is nearly impossible. To pick one, I'd have to mark *Sonic the Hedgehog* as the system's most shining moment, followed by *LandStalker*, *Gunstar Heroes*, and *Earthworm Jim*. But what about *El Viento*, and *Arcus Odyssey* and *Granada* and *Alicia Dragoon* and *Golden Axe*

and on, and on, and on. I doubt we will ever see a system as loved by serious gamers as the Genesis was. The romance of 16-bit combined with the uncertainty of where it would take us was enough to make your head spin. With a roller coaster ride of amazing CES shows, where three estimable competitors fought it out to fuel the fire, it was a great era to be a part of. Before the Genesis was retired, it spawned God's gifts to handhelds, *The Nomad*, which remains to this day the best portable gaming device in existence, just ahead of the *Turbo Express*. Hey, they're still fighting!

CPU: 68000 Clock Speed: 7.61 MHz RAM: 64K VRAM: 64K Sound RAM: 8K  
Co-Processor: Z80 Resolution: 320 x 224 Colors: 64 0F 512 Planes: 2  
SCROLLING: 1 SPRITESound chip: YAMAHA YM2612 Channels: 6 STEREO

# TurboGrafx-16

By Dave Halverson

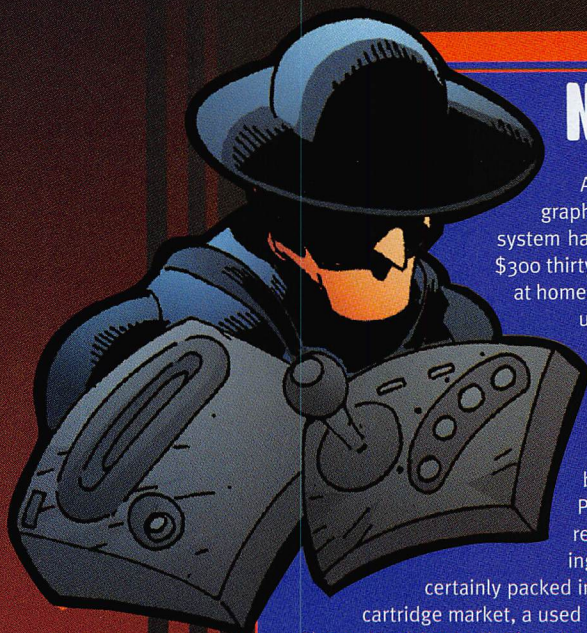
If you bought the TurboGrafx instead of the Genesis and had a Sega-lovin' friend, then you are no doubt familiar with the war that ensued regarding the 8- vs. 16-bit issue (and which one it was) and which console was better. The Turbo could display more colors but couldn't do hardware parallax, while the Genesis could dish out the parallax and cool wavy effects but display only a measly 64 colors. Of course, the big thing back then was scaling sprites, which neither could do, although the Genesis, in the right hands, could fake it better. I had both consoles and early on was torn myself with *Bonk* on the one side and *Sonic* on the other. And so it went until the Turbo CD reared its 400-dollar head. I was overly taken by it and rushed to get one the day it arrived. Shortly thereafter the music in *Y's* lulled me into a deep trance that has never worn off. To this day it remains one of the best soundtracks ever.

The CD lost its sparkle rather quickly soon after, as everyone realized it was pretty much just for music, although it did make those games sound sweet. As fond as I am of the Genesis, I have an almost equal affinity for the Turbo and its many incarnations, including the LT, which sits proudly on my desk to this day, the Shuttle, the Duo, and the exalted but short lived *SuperGrafx*. So, it looks like a radiator, it gave me *Aldynes*, *Gran Zort*, and *Ghouls 'n Ghosts*—games that keep on giving. Defining Turbo HuCard games (the coolest format ever) include *Legendary Axe*, *Air Zonk*, *Alien Crush*, *Atomic Robo Kid*, *Dead Moon*, *Ninja Spirit*, and *Blazing Lasers*. The CD unit in itself was a defining moment, especially since it was the first time anyone ever played *Street Fighter*. "You have a lot to learn before you can beat me...try again kiddo." It was also the first time Yuzo Koshiro's hypnotic orchestral bliss seeped into our consciousness. A victim of the Genesis vs. SNES wars, the Turbo went away too quickly in the U.S. NEC is sorely missed in the system wars of today, as will be Sega after the Dreamcast has run its course. Times, they are a changing. But my dream of *Bonk* on a next generation console continues...



CPU: HuC6280 Microprocessor speed (MIPS): 1.5 Graphics processor: 16-BIT CUSTOM Resolution: 512x224 Color palette: 482/512 Maximum sprites: 64 Sprites size: 16x16 Audio: SIX CHANNEL RAM: 8K





## Neo Geo By Dave Halverson

As far as shock value goes, the Neo Geo ranks at the top in my book, because graphically it had a greater impact on me the first time I fired it up than any other system has had to date. Of course, I would soon come to know the frustration of the \$300 thirty-minute game, but we'll get to that. The Neo Geo offered true arcade gaming at home, for the first time in history. It wasn't cheap at \$500, though, so I bought mine used out of the Recycler for \$175 with *Baseball Stars*, *Ninja Combat* and *Magician Lord*. I remember like it was yesterday turning on *Baseball Stars* and then taking a step back in pure awe and just staring at it as the huge hand-drawn sprites danced on the screen along with perfect voice and awesome music. Then came *Magician Lord* and no sleep for days. Soon after the Neo Geo was released I opened my mail-order (Die Hard Gamers Club) with 5000 borrowed dollars and felt what it was like on the other side of the counter. People used to camp in the store waiting for Geo games to arrive from Japan. I remember when *Cyber-Lip* came in, everyone was back after an hour or so looking to trade it in for something else. Those Neo Geo games were short, but they certainly packed in the replayability and bang for the buck. If you never braved the 8-inch-wide cartridge market, a used Neo Geo should be the next purchase you make. Get yourself a copy of *Metal Slug 2*, *Magician Lord*, *Blues Journey*, *Viewpoint*, *Top Hunter*, *Nam 75*, *Baseball Stars*, *Cyber-Lip*, and the fighting series of your choice and have at some of the most legendary arcade gaming that there has ever been.

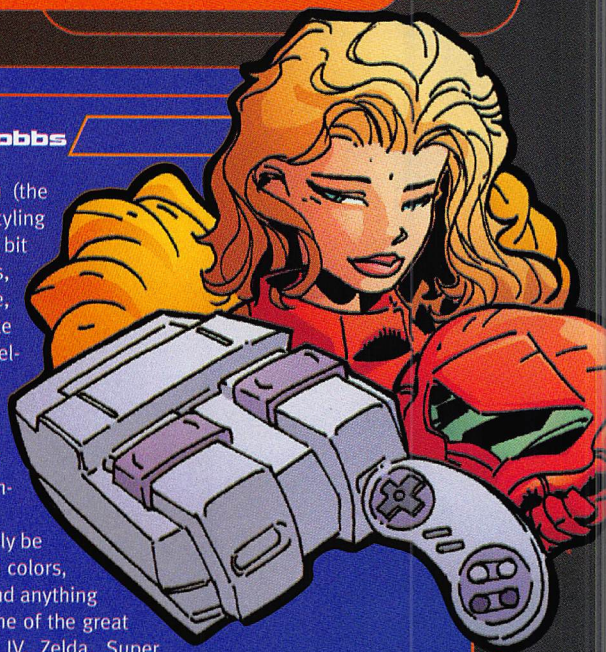
Processor: MOTOROLA 68000(12 MHZ, 16-BIT), ZIL0G-80A(4 MHZ, 8-BIT)  
Resolution: 320X224 Color palette: 65,536 Maximum colors on-screen: 4,096  
Maximum sprites on screen: 380 Maximum sprite size: 16X512

## Super N.E.S. By Mike Hobbs

I was enamored with the design of the Super Famicom (the Japanese version of the SNES). Its sleek, Tri-corder-like styling stood as the best-looking hardware I'd ever seen. So it was a bit of a drag to see the SNES for the first time, with its obnoxious, blocky styling and purple highlights. However, it grew on me, especially once I held the system in my hands. Its billet-like construction stood in stark relief to the rather light, cheap-feeling plastic of the Genesis hardware. And to this day, no other system has come close to quality feeling of the SNES controller ports as they delicately click-locked when a pad was inserted. But the SNES will rightfully be remembered for an absolutely incredible software library, a better one in my opinion than the Genesis'.

It started with *Super Mario World*, a game that could arguably be called the best 2D action/platformer there ever was. The rich colors, lush sound, and Mode 7 effects elevated the game well beyond anything the Genesis was doing at the time, and set the stage for some of the great gaming experiences of the 16-bit era. *Super Castlevania IV*, *Zelda*, *Super Metroid*, *Axelay*, *Street Fighter II*, *Star Fox*, Square's *Final Fantasy* games and *Chrono Trigger*, *Yoshi's Island*—these are but a few of the outstanding games that defined the SNES. The fact that the system was a little deficient in sports titles (not something that bothered me) is certainly what helped the Genesis attain equal footing against a machine that was technically superior in every area save for processor speed.

If sports games were of little consequence to you as a gamer, then the SNES stands as one of the most well-rounded systems ever, and a true testament to the strength of Nintendo's hardware design savvy and brilliant gameplay sense. It will be remembered fondly.



CPU: 65816(16-BIT)@3.58MHZ Resolution: 512X448 Color palette: 256/32768  
RAM: 128K RAM VRAM: 64K Maximum sprites: 128 Maximum sprite size: 64X64  
Maximum sprites per line: 32 Sound: SONY SPC700 16-BIT AUDIO PROCESSING UNIT (APU)  
16-BIT PULSE CODE MODULATOR (PCM)—DIGITAL DATA CONVERTER





## Sega CD

By Brady Fiechter

You'd think that with all the flak the Sega CD receives when a heated system debate begins to boil, there couldn't possibly be much to like about the heavily undersupported add-on. But from where I'm standing, the Sega CD was not only a viable product but one that gave me some of the best games I've ever played.

Take the wonderful *Lunar: The Silver Star* and its even-better sequel, *Lunar: Eternal Blue*, two of the finest RPGs of their time. Only *Final Fantasy VI* and *Chrono Trigger* sit in my mind as 16-bit superiors.

And how about *Popfulmail*, the magical and beautifully conceived fantasy adventure that uniquely blended action, story, role-playing and platforming. Of all the fine titles available for the Sega CD, I look at *Popfulmail* as one of the most overlooked games on the system.

If action-platformers were your thing, the Sega CD had one of the best with the challenging *Batman Returns*, which offered an incredible driving portion to complete the grossing package. *Terminator CD* was also a standout, with its heavy action, dusky settings and excellent music, which could never have been duplicated on the Genesis' incapable sound chip; one of the highlights of the Sega CD was its Red Book audio.

For anyone who calls themselves a devout gamer, to pass on *Sonic CD* is like calling yourself a lover of music while disregarding anything written before the 20th century. This best-of-the-series game is a classic, an achievement that not even the mighty *Sonic Adventure*, fueled by the strength of the Dreamcast hardware, can overshadow.

Perhaps the triumph of the system was the *Blade Runner*-inspired *Snatcher*, a superb, gritty, sci-fi graphic adventure that remains one of the last of its kind. With this and other great games – *Silpheed*, *Ecco the Dolphin*, *Flink*, and to name but a few – the Sega CD was far from an afterthought in the 16-bit scene.

CPU: MOTOROLA 68000 @ 12.5 MHZ GRAPHICS PROCESSOR: CUSTOM ASIC  
RAM: 6 MBIT MAIN RAM 512 KBIT PCM WAVEFORM MEMORY WAVEFILE MEMORY 128  
KBIT CD-ROM DATA CACHE MEMORY 64 KBIT INTERNAL BACKUP RAM

## 3DO

By Dave Halverson

Ever hear the phrase "early adopter"? That's a nice way of describing people crazy enough to buy new technology the day it comes out, no matter what the price or support. It also describes me. Yes, I bought a 3DO the day it came out for \$699.99. The first thing I noticed was that the D-pad sucked and the system could double as a coffee table. That was right before I got sucked into *Crystal Dynamics Crash 'N Burn*, which I couldn't get enough of. Going back now and examining all of its framey glory, I'm astounded at how far we've come and wonder what the heck I was thinking. Overall the only way I can describe my feelings for the 3DO would be hit and miss, leaning a little more towards the miss side. Once I got a Japanese controller and the library grew a little, an affinity for the system began to develop. Unfortunately, though, hits like *Total Eclipse*, *Gex*, *Road Rash*, *Tetsujin*, *Way of the Warrior* (the famed fighter *Naughty Dog* made in their apartment) *Madden Football*, *the Horde*, and *Guardian Wars*, came too infrequently between subpar titles covering all walks of funky multimedia. Trip was already attempting to tap into mainstream America, it just didn't seem to be time yet. In the end, the hardware just seemed to lack a solid focus in any specific direction, as it didn't really excel in either 2D or 3D gaming; it just kind of did both okay. It was a new beginning of sorts, though, as the first home console to push polygons, and there were enough breakthroughs for it to leave a mark, albeit a faint one.



Processor: ARM6D 32-bit 12.5Mhz RISC CPU Video: Twin accelerated video coprocessors. Resolution: 640x480 pixel resolution at 16.7 million colors 9.16 million real pixels per second Transparency, translucency, and color shading Data Rate: 16-bit 25Mhz Digital Signal Processor 2X speed CD-ROM drive 2 megabytes DRAM 1 megabyte VRAM 1 megabyte ROM  
Audio: 16-bit Stereo Sound





# Atari Jaguar

By Dave Halverson

You may think I'm a bonehead for admitting it, but I didn't hate the Jaguar. I hated that most of the games were crap to a previously unseen degree after being touted as the second coming, but a few titles left an indelible impression on me, namely Aliens vs. Predator, Tempest 2000, Cybermorph, Rayman, Defender 2000, and Iron Soldier. I even liked Zool 2 a little. Of course, for every good 64-bit (yeah, sure) game, there were a ton of duds like Club Drive, Checkered Flag, Kasumi Ninja and the turd of all turds, Fight for Life ("Ooh, yah!").

Fight for Life was the game Atari touted as "better than Virtua Fighter," claiming that one of AM2's main men stepped off of the Sega train to join Atari and create the next big thing in fighting games. Whatever the case (some claim AM2's janitor may have had a hand in Fight for Life's development), the game was a complete pile. The characters resembled men made of 2 x 4s and the music sounded like the extended dance mix from Boogie Nights.

That's when I knew that Atari's triumphant return was nearing its end. During the Jag's precarious life cycle, some under-realized virtual goggles never came and then went, along with the Jaguar CD, which I believe is the single most barren system ever in terms of available software, although Battlemorph is an interesting title. The Jag's defining moment is a toss up between AVP and Tempest 2000. The big question is, how many "bits" was it really?

Processors (X5): GPU - "TOM" 32-BIT RISC @ 25.5 MHZ DSP-"JERRY" 32-BIT RISC @ 25.5 MHZ Object processor: 64-BIT RISC Object blitter: 64-BIT RISC MOTOROLA 68000 @ 13.29 MHZ BUS bandwidth: 106.4 MEGABYTE PER SECOND Color palette: 16.8 MILLION COLORS JAGUAR CD: DOUBLE-SPEED CD-ROM MECHANISM 790 MEGABYTE STORAGE CAPACITY 352.8 KBYTE/SECOND SUSTAINED DATA RATE

## 32X

By Dave Halverson

It was music to my ears — a 32-bit game attachment for the Genesis that would allow it to push polys, increase its 2D capabilities, and clean up the dated sound chip problem! Sketching it on a napkin during a strategic dinner at a CES long ago, Sega, who obviously had more money than they knew what to do with at the time, had the best of intentions when they put the plan into play. Unfortunately, though, marketing execs (a.k.a. "the suits") reared their ugly heads and decided that the awesome sound chip designed for the system (and the 5 or 10 bucks it would add to the price) was too risky, and so they totally hacked the 32X's sound capabilities. Although this scarred the system's prowess, I still loved my 32X, and still do to this day for one big reason — Knuckles Chaotix. Yuji Naka's brilliant 2D contribution to the system remains one of my favorite games to this day. Chaotix employs an intriguing buddy system in which you are tethered to one of four trademark Sonic Team characters chosen inside of a huge UFO catcher. By "holding" your on-screen pal, the object is to speed in the opposite direction, creating tension, and then shwing!, launch both characters to new heights within the vast Sonic-like levels stretching in all directions. The music in Chaotix was and still is pure magic.

The system's other bright spots were Tempo, Spiderman-Web of Fire, Blackthorne, Metal Head, Pitfall-The Mayan Adventure, Star Wars Arcade, Space Harrier, and Virtua Racing Deluxe. It was a short ride, but for those who took it, was pretty cool — and it still looks really funky. I have mine resting atop a CDX, another fine Sega invention, and it's just too cool a setup for words. There are those who consider the 32X one of Sega's biggest mistakes, but considering the cost I don't agree with that assessment. People don't seem to mind buying Voodoo cards for their PCs, why should the 32X be viewed any differently? Now, that big ol' FMV studio they built to create games like Night Trap...that was stupid.



Processor: Twin Hitachi (SH2) 32 bit RISC processors - clock speed of 23 MHZ - 40 MIPS Co-processors: Genesis 68000, Z80, Genesis 32X VDP - 50,000 texture-mapped polygons/sec - hardware scaling and rotation Video: 32,768 simultaneous colors on screen Memory: 512k (4 MBit) additional RAM to Genesis/SegaCD memory Audio: Stereo PCM chip - audio mixing with Genesis sound - 2 additional channels





## Sega Saturn

By Dave Halverson

Next to the demise of the Virtual Boy, Sega's mishandling of the Saturn goes down as my second biggest disappointment in gaming. To say nothing of the vast number of titles they left in Japan, and abandoning the likes of Streets of Rage, Golden Axe, Phantasy Star, Alex Kidd, and a plethora of other viable franchises, they were sitting on the best 2D hardware ever created and they didn't even attempt to capitalize on it. Instead, they created 3D games the system couldn't handle (for the most part), and invested way too much cash in American development that tanked more often than not. Had Sega known that fully realized versions of the games that made half of us gamers in the first place would have had us clamoring for more, the Saturn could have made a historical statement—that games don't have to be polygon-based to be good. There is much to be said for glorious 2D games like Guardian Heroes, Astal, and Castlevania: Symphony of the Night. Imagine the likes of Streets of Rage, a traditional Phantasy Star, Golden Axe, or Alex Kidd brought to life in the same fashion. 2D sprites mixed with 3D backgrounds, or completely hand-drawn with stellar effects, deep parallax, and tons of rotation schemes: there's no limit to what Sega could have done for 2D gaming, but instead, the Saturn couldn't stand up to a more powerful 3D machine, and Sony ate them up. Sega could have been "the other 32-bit system" instead of "the weaker 32-bit system." That said, the Saturn is probably my favorite console to date. Confused? Because of the support it found in Japan and some of the games that did represent its prowess to the full extent, I'll never stop playing Saturn games. Panzer Dragoon, NIGHTS, Guardian Heroes, Astal, Shining Wisdom, Dragon Force, Bug!, Dark Savior, the Lunar remixes, Magic Knights Rayearth, Shining the Holy Ark, Clockwork Knight 1 & 2, Legend of Oasis, Radiant Silvergun, Princess Crown, Super Tempo, and many more Japanese games that never saw the light of day are all must-plays. Some of these represent the last bastion of 2D, while others are 3D gaming at its most creative stage yet. The Saturn will go down in History as a sad story for some but an unforgettable experience for others.

CPU(S): 2 HITACHI 28.6MHZ, 50-MIPS SH2 32-BIT RISC PROCESSORS  
HITACHI SH1 32-BIT RISC PROCESSOR Video: VDP 1 32-BIT VIDEO DISPLAY PROCESSOR VDP 2 32-BIT VIDEO DISPLAY PROCESSOR SATURN CONTROL UNIT (SCU) Audio: MOTOROLA 68000 SOUND PROCESSOR YAMAHA FH1 DSP SOUND PROCESSOR  
Memory: 2MB (16 MEGABITS) RAM 1.54MB (12 MEGABITS) VIDEO RAM 540KB (4 MEGABITS) AUDIO RAM 540KB (4 MEGABITS) CD-ROM CACHE

## Virtual Boy

By Dave Halverson

The biggest disappointment in all of my years playing games was the day that Nintendo dropped the Virtual Boy, Gunpei Yokoi's vision of the future and first foray into immersive 3D. Leaving some of the coolest games I had ever played in the lurch, I was totally devastated. At the last CES I attended before its demise, I played a racing game where you could see the whole track and everyone on it as you drove, and a dolphin game that was just to cool for words. But rather than give it a chance by putting more marketing dollars behind it, or let me make it its own magazine (with 3D glasses packed in) which I offered to do, Nintendo just tanked the coolest 3D invention that has ever been. It was so unlike Nintendo to abandon something they had once so proudly exhibited. To this day, I stick my head in my VB at least once a month for a game of Wario Land. Mario Clash, Mario Tennis, Red Alarm and Vertical Force are also unforgettably immersive experiences. Sadly, Gunpei's life was cut short soon after the VB's extinction. His was a brilliant mind (he created Metroid, after all) which leaves me sad that we'll never again experience the fruits of his unique vision.



Processor: NEC V810 (P/N UPD70732) 32-BIT RISC PROCESSOR @ 20 MHZ (18 MIPS) 1 MB OF DRAM AND 512 KB OF P-SRAM 1 KB CACHE Display: RTI SLA (P4) 384 X 224 RESOLUTION 50.2 HZ HORIZONTAL SCAN RATE Power: 6 AA BATTERIES (9 VDC) OR AC ADAPTER (10 VDC) Sound: 16-BIT STEREO Serial port: 8 PIN CABLE Weight: 760 GRAMS Dimensions: 8.5"H X 10"W X 4.3"D





# PlayStation

By Brady Fiechter

Here we are, four months away from the emergence of the PlayStation 2, and its precursor continues to show no sign of fading. When I play great games like the recent *Dino Crisis*, *Resident Evil 3*, *Crash Team Racing* or *Spyro: Ripto's Rage*, my desire for the next technology is dampened; what we have now is just so engrossing.

The PlayStation has expanded boundaries in a number of ways, most notably—be it good or bad—the use of 3D design to power its games. While I believe the move away from 2D gameplay and presentation is unfortunate, I can't deny that games like *Tomb Raider*, *Wipeout*, *Gran Turismo* and *Metal Gear Solid* were extraordinary games—entirely fresh and new, inventive and superbly crafted.

I leave *Crash Bandicoot* out of that group, simply because it occupies a more traditional approach to game design. That's not to say it's any less of an achievement, because if we want to talk traditional, *Castlevania: Symphony of the Night* is pure 2D action, platforming and adventure, ripped from the pages of *Metroid* and the entire *Castlevania* series—and it's one of the greatest games I've ever played.

The *Resident Evil* games are also some of my favorites. Capcom has pioneered a classic series that uses music, sound, cinematics, emotional manipulation and visual intrigue to engulf the player. It is rare for a game to resonate on so many levels.

Unfortunately, the PlayStation will never be remembered for its classic 2D games like the beautiful Lomax: *Adventures in Lemming Land*, and *Rayman*. At least the extraordinary character designs and challenging *Out of This World*-inspired gameplay of *Abe* managed to penetrate the imaginations of a deservedly much wider audience.

When trying to pinpoint one specific reason for the PlayStation's boundless success within the next-generation race, the obvious answer lies in Sony's sense to look toward every genre with full support. Just look at the proliferation of role playing games, an anemic category on 16-bit that I never imagined would receive the nourishment it has. From *Suikoden* to *Final Fantasy* to *Grandia*, the PlayStation is glorious music to the ears of RPG fans.

If you would have asked me five years ago if a company by the name of Sony could stand tall against giants Nintendo and Sega, my answer would have been, Not a chance. Now look who's the giant.

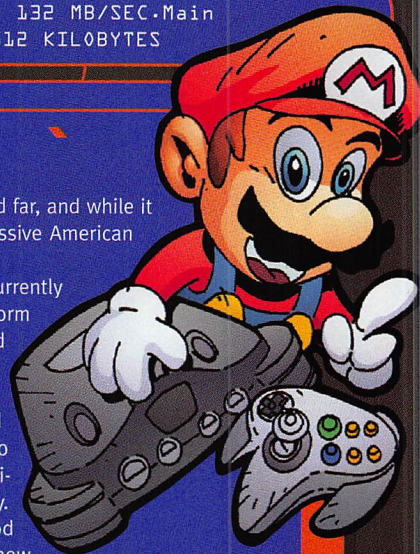
CPU: R3000A 32-BIT RISC PROCESSOR @ 33.8688MHZ Operating performance: 30 MIPS Instruction cache: 4 KB Data cache: 1 KB BUS: 132 MB/SEC. Main RAM: 2 MEGABYTES Video RAM: 1 MEGABYTE Sound RAM: 512 KILOBYTES

# Nintendo 64

By Dave Halverson

It came with the promise of no more redraw and hi-res textures from near and far, and while it didn't deliver 100 percent in either case, it came close enough to garner a massive American user/fan base—including me, and I don't even like Pokémon.

One of only two big fans of the 64 here at GR (although everyone likes it), it is currently the system that I play the most by some measure. Being an adamant action/platform fan, I guess it only makes sense that I would gravitate towards a system blessed by critter and platform game makers like Rare, NCL, UbiSoft, Argonaut, VIZ, and Konami. It's actually quite amazing that the 64 has been as popular as it has, given that Enix and Square, two of Nintendo's biggest draws pre-N64, hit the road when they heard that the cart format was a definite go. To date there has been no big-name traditional RPG released on the system. If you'd had uttered the possibility of that happening three years ago, people would have laughed hysterically. There has also been no *Megaman*, *Metroid*, *Kid Icarus*, *Contra*, or a good *Castlevania* for the console. But still it has persevered. I suppose it just goes to show that A titles like *Banjo*, *Diddy Kong Racing*, *Super Mario Kart*, *Super Mario 64*, *Jet Force Gemini*, *DK 64*, *F-Zero X*, *Waverace*, *Rayman 2*, *Zelda: The Ocarina of Time* and more can sustain a console all by their lonesome. I also think that the addition of the Ram Pak came at just the right time to sustain the system until the Dolphin releases, at which time Nintendo will again make a bid for the video game crown. It's funny how I so vehemently back a company that doesn't seem to need or really care that I do, but hey, I have to be honest. So they bolt their test games to a system and send them with a guard, and never green-flag my ideas—I still love 'em. As for a defining moment in the 64's life cycle, so far, I'd have to say there have been two: the release and impending love affair with *Super Mario 64* and the arrival and even deeper love affair we had with *Zelda: The Ocarina of Time*. And there's still much more to come, like *Excitebike*, *Conkers*, and Rare's last big hoorah...



CPU: 64 BIT RISC CPU, (R4300I SERIES) @ 93.75 MHZ Graphics: 64-BIT MIPS RISC CO-PROCESSOR, GSP & DP, 62.5 MHZ (RCP) BUILT-IN AUDIO/VIDEO VECTOR PROCESSOR (RSP) BUILT-IN PIXEL DRAWING PROCESSOR (RDP)





## Dreamcast By Mike Hobbs

I was engulfed in an almost mythic anticipation for the Dreamcast when it was about to be launched in Japan during the holiday season of 1998. I had studied the Sonic Adventure shots to death waiting for the chance to play the world's first 128-bit console, and when it launched with Virtua Fighter 3 and Pen Pen, I saw the potential more than I saw the actual games, and I was happy. When Sonic Adventure landed a few weeks after the Japanese release, I had reached a new level of gaming bliss. The speed, resolution, texture quality, and overall visual solidity was truly next level, the kind of thing that only highly accelerated PCs were capable of.

After that, the Dreamcast adoration bubble burst as a severe drought of quality software had me quickly retreating to the tried and true ways of 32-bit. Power Stone, Sega Rally 2, and Blue Stinger livened things up, as did simple affairs like Aero Wings and Shutokou Highway Battle, but there was simply nothing approaching the kind of gameplay experiences that I was used to from PS, N64, and Saturn. It wasn't until Soul Calibur that I was wholly impressed with the Dreamcast again, and for all that game's brilliance, it was still just a one-on-one fighter, not the fleshed-out game-play experience that keeps you locked away for hours on end.

The scary thing for Sega, despite their American and European success with the Dreamcast, is that their epic games won't even be released in Japan until after the PS2 launch, seriously dulling the sheen of Shenmue and Eternal Arcadia. Maybe Sega is right when they counter that the PS2 is simply too expensive to succeed as a game platform, but if this is what they're relying on, I can only wish them the best of luck. However, the fact remains that Sega is a premier software developer, and their best games approach Nintendo-like levels of fun and addiction, so at least they will always have that going for them. It just might be enough to keep them going until the next round of hardware wars.

CPU: HITACHI SH-4 Graphics engine: POWERVR2 DC  
Polygons: 3,000,000 PPS Sound hardware: YAMAHA 64-CHANNEL PCM/ADPCM  
RAM: 16MB VRAM: 8MB Sound RAM: 2MB OS: WINDOWS CE Media: GD-ROM

## Handhelds

### Lynx- By Dave Halverson

You haven't lived until you've hooked up two or three people and had at Warbirds or Slime World on the Lynx. Another great Atari machine designed to bring the company back after they blew it on console, Epyx stellar design was a revelation; it actually had hardware scaling! Of course, it had pretty crappy resolution too, but who cared? I was 100 per cent dialed into California Games, ElectroCop, Gates of Zendecon, Ninja Gaiden, Road Riot, Stun Runner, Steel Talons, and towards the end of the system's reign, Dracula-The Undead, a full-on survival horror game before Resident Evil was even conceived. Before the Lynx went away, the huge ambidextrous dog-bone model was redesigned and a cool plastic version came out. If you're in the market for a used Lynx, search out the old one for its sturdy design and louder volume.

### NEO-GEO Pocket Color- By Mike Hobbs

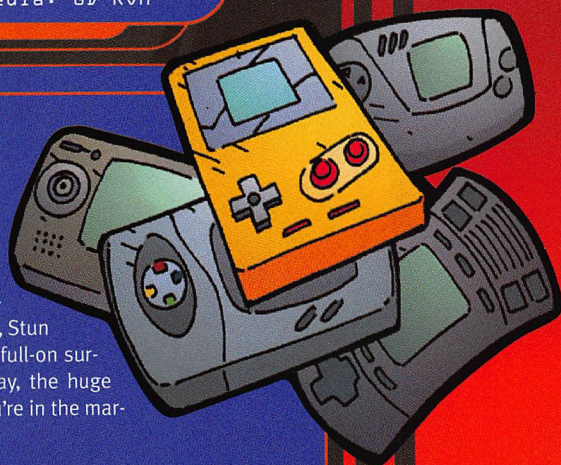
I wasted money on the original black and white Neo Geo Pocket as the color-capable system was ridiculously fast in coming, but I had huge respect for SNK's hardware design. The clicky, Neo CD-like joypad and solid construction gave the little system a feeling of quality superior to any other handheld. The debut of the color system gave us slightly more bloated hardware, but a beautiful TFT screen and awesome games like Metal Slug 1st Mission and a great version of Samurai Shodown. This system will never have the success or support of Nintendo's ubiquitous Game Boy, but it is the system for hardware fetishists and host to a handful of solid games.

### Nintendo Game Boy- By Michael Puccini

In 1989, I bought the newly released Game Boy with the Tetris pack-in, thinking it was a great little gaming system that would probably be around a few years and then fade away. Last year, it celebrated its 10th birthday. I now have all FIVE incarnations of The Iron Man of the video game industry — Game Boy, Color Casing GB, GB pocket, GB pocket Color, and GB Color — and hundreds of games. Last year, it featured the hottest piece of software in the galaxy with Pokémon and, with the announcement of the Game Boy Advance, the GB is destined to be the longest living video game system ever.

### Sega Game Gear- By Tom Stratton

In 1991 Sega returned with another new platform. Well, maybe not new, but definitely portable. The GG sports almost the exact same specs as their Master System—a zippy little Z80 CPU displaying up to 32 colors. Not too shabby.





# Industry Predictions For Y2K

We posed the following two questions to some of today's top gaming minds...

Question 1: Beyond the year 2000, how do you think, or in your opinion how should, game design change or evolve?

Question 2: Do you believe gaming will transcend its current state and truly become mainstream?

## Ken Naito/President- Climax

#1: I don't think that game design will evolve. It will be harder and harder for the video game industry because there will be more entertainment other than video games. There are people who can't quit drinking, but people can quit playing video games. Although PS2 can play DVD-video, DVD-video would be a rival of games. Although PS2 has also many terminals (IEEE1394, USB, Card Bus, etc.) with such a low price (for adult consumers), it is very expensive as a video game console for children. Also, people say the video game will be very close to movies, it means games will be compared with other entertainment at the same level.

#2: Yes, I do. In the near future, we will learn not to say "video game consoles" as they are called today. Networking will be the most important key factor. When NTT, Softbank, and SONY re-create the network infrastructure [GR's note: NTT will begin ADSL, Softbank and SONY will use radio-wave], the time will come for us to ask, "What can we do in the video game world?"

## Dave Perry/President-Shiny Ent.

#1: I am hoping we get more freedom in games. I love it when you break free from a driving track, or from a snowboard run or explore hidden areas in action shooters or platformers when you "think" you are free for a minute. You found your way out of the "trapped" world that has been created for you. Currently most games only offer this for a few brief seconds before a big flashing "Wrong Way" comes up on the screen. I also look forward to better character actions. So that if you shoot a guy in the head, his buddy standing beside him takes that as a hint to turn around. (And then seems to care!)

Or when characters start to get real personality. As you have seen, games are limited to catchphrases and breasts at the moment... The true feeling that you truly care about the game's characters has not happened yet. So like in movies, if the character dies, you cry.

In movies, you get to know the characters by the things they say, the way they react to situations, their fun/cool/interesting personality. When you see that person die after getting to know and like them, then you see the clear loss. Video games still treat people like cannon fodder... A lot of work can be done in this area.

#2: Yes, I believe that people, no matter how computer un-savvy and no matter how much they try to avoid it... They will be pushing buttons and looking at screens for a lot of things in the future. Where there are buttons and screens, so will we be.

## Jez San/President-Argonaut Software

#1: With the additional computation and graphical horsepower of the new game systems and latest PC 2000 specs, I think it's reasonable to

expect gameplay to be derived from more autonomous and intelligent behavior of characters and other simulated players. We can also expect new generations of 3D technology that allow more lifelike...more cinematic...more fluid forms of expression and character depiction. For instance, in the future, Croc 3—or is it 4?—will allow us to use "soft body dynamics" that would give the appearance of a flexible skin and body that could move and bulge and the crocodile goes about his merry way. They do this in the movie business on high-end workstations for flabby dinosaurs, but it's about time we did it for our games. Game designs that feature these new characters will be able to populate worlds with interesting environments and gameplay that can take on new directions as the player comes up with new ways to interact with the game worlds. This is because physics, AI, and other forms of technology are more suited to these new higher-end platforms than the previous generation. This trend will continue for the foreseeable future.

#2: Yes. I think, when one in three homes has a computer or video game system, and plays games at home. Then I think it will truly be mainstream. What? One in three homes already have a computer or video game system? Then games must be mainstream already! It can only get better when the MTV generation get into their 60s... then they'll be no excuse. They'll still be playing Croc 17.

## Ken Lobb/Exec. Producer, Product Acquisition and Dev.- Nintendo

#1: Games have come a long way in the last 20+ years! I see the evolution continuing, with an emphasis on what you might call cross pollination, where concepts begin to cross genres. This can be seen already: Goldeneye and Perfect Dark adding puzzle-like elements to 1st-person shooters; Mario, Banjo and DK bringing adventure into the action game; and Gran Turismo adding RPG elements (powering up) to the driving genre.

There is also the revolution which should be created by the new systems. More power should finally bring real physics into play across all genres, as well as a dramatic movement towards IK based animation systems. These things are only being touched in the current generation, and should have a big impact on high-end game design moving forward.

Multi-player gaming has played a big role in this generation, and as the new millennium comes upon us, this aspect can be taken to new levels through massive multiplayer gaming, team play, etc.

It's been a great ride, and I personally am very excited as I contemplate what we'll be playing a few years from now, as well as a few decades from now! What will gaming be at the turn of the next century? can you say the Thirteenth Floor!

#2: This is clearly happening now. For most players, games are not a toy, but a valid method of recreation which doesn't necessarily end when girls (or boys) and cars come into their lives. As the NES generation ages, and has children of their own, games will become a very strong bonding tool for the family. Where the family of the '50s and '60s gathered together to watch TV, the children of the next century will grow up with parents who love games as much as they do. Time spent playing games with your children is a great opportunity to spend time together, far better than time spent in front of the typical sitcom. I grew up in a world where TV was the standard—everyone had a TV, I couldn't relate to life without one. My children have grown up in a world of games. My younger daughter was shocked to hear that when I grew up "games" meant board games and cards!

In my family, we spend more time together playing than watching TV. I have a very close relationship with my children, nephews, nieces, etc., due in large part to my passion for gameplay. I honestly feel indebted to our great industry for my main hobby, my great career, and my happy family life!



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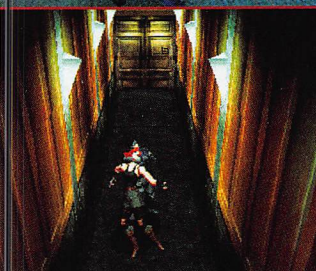
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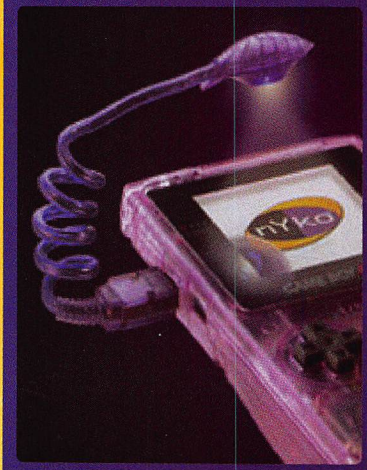




## games mobilized giveaway...

Look around. It's the new millennium, and nothing's exploded. Yet, anyway. Still, it's best to make sure you've got games and batteries in case of any disaster. Let me know which five games you'll need in the event of such a calamity by January 31st at [efear@gamersrepublic.com](mailto:efear@gamersrepublic.com), and I'll pick five responses at random and send each of you the number one game!\*

One final note: take a look at this monster below: it's the Nyko Worm Light for GBC. Get a good look. Now go to your local game store, spend the \$10 (plus tax), and get the best lighting solution yet created for this machine. You (and your eyes) will thank me.



**missile command** dev/pub: hasbro avail: now

Looking at this game in action, it appears to be a clean update of the classic arcade game of the past: different locations around the world to defend, combined with 8-bit colors popping off the screen. Sit in the commander's chair, though, and the view changes. The Game Boy's directional controller just doesn't seem to move the cursor with the same precision as the trackball of old, and precision is what this game's all about. If you're a die-hard fan of the game, by all means grab this version. All others need not apply. **C-**



**boarderzone** dev: creations pub: infogrames avail: now

Snowboarding and skateboarding trick-based games have been growing in popularity on consoles, so it's no wonder that Infogrames is tapping into the handheld market as well.

What they're bringing us is a 3D-ish snowboarding game, a la 1080 and Cool Boarders, where you choose one of four boarders (each with different strengths and weaknesses), one of four boards (again, with different strengths and weaknesses), and one of several race modes: Competition, consisting of Race Attack (speed boarding vs. the computer), Trick (rack up



points with outrageous tricks), Time (beat run times to advance), Boarderzone (combining slalom, speed, and tricks), or the Challenge mode, which consists of Time runs, Trick runs, or running the Slalom.

Tricks, which form the foundation of this game, follow the pattern of consoles: in a jump, hit combinations of direction keys and A & B buttons, and these combinations determine the trick performed. The learning curve is fairly steep: expect plenty of frustration the first 15 or 20 minutes while getting the feel for the trick combos. But once this is figured out and landing techniques learned, the game begins to unfold.

The limitations to this game are not the fault of Infogrames; the 8-bit processor and small screen obviously can't give the same gameplay as the bigger console titles. Considering what they had to work with, though, BoarderZone delivers the goods—plus your risk of breaking any bones is much slimmer than real-life trickboarding. **B+**



**test drive 6** dev: xantera pub: infogrames avail: now

Is it possible to bring a popular console-based 3D racing franchise to the handheld market? Infogrames thinks so, and with Test Drive 6 they aim to prove it.

Rather than doing 3D-ish racing like Top Gear or V-Rally, Xantera has opted for an isometric overhead view. The upside: you get a better indication of speed and distance; the downside: it's tough to see what's coming up next, due to the limited size of the screen. The small size of the tracks makes it easy to memorize the upcoming turns and obstacles, which leads us to our first beef: why do car bodies and patches of glue (not oil!) litter the later tracks? We realize this increases the difficulty, but good track design could bring similar results.

The game mechanics follow the Test Drive rule book: start with a small amount of cash and a cheap car; race the car through basic courses, racking up wins and cash; buy faster cars and upgrades to get

into bigger races; repeat until victory is achieved.

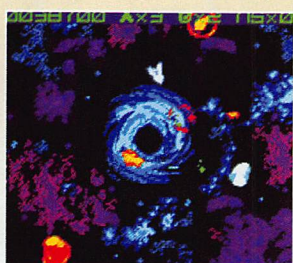
With ten licensed cars like the Dodge Charger, Audi TT, and Dodge Viper, and various play modes like single races through various cities across the globe, tournaments in which you can win big cash, and a cop mode where you attempt to pull over your opponents, Infogrames has all the pieces in place. It's just missing something compelling to bring you back again, especially once the tournament mode is completed.

It's tough—nearly impossible—to make a really great racing game in a handheld format, but Test Drive 6 is a darn good shot at it. **B-**



**asteroids** dev: syrox pub: activation avail: now

With all of the "classic" video games being updated and re-released, we've witnessed a virtual train wreck of both good and (mostly) bad titles. Well, put this one in the "good" category, and thank Activision for giving this game a new look without dumbing it down.



What they've added, besides full-color eye candy, is more depth and longer gameplay by creating five unique zones in which to destroy asteroids, alien spaceships, and other items that drift through your area. These new zones range from Deep Space, similar to the original game, to areas filled with black holes or supernovas; each zone has 15 levels to complete in order to progress.

Sure, this game doesn't come in a big, beefy cabinet like the original black and white game, but you don't have to go to the local pizza joint to pump quarters into it. Do yourself a favor, and pick this game up. It's a blast. **B-**

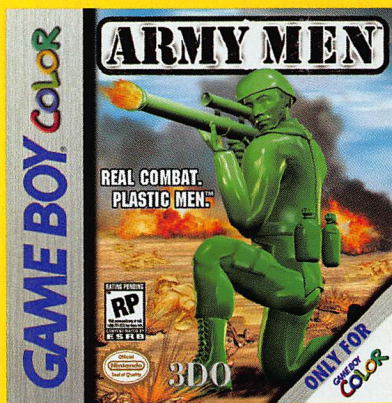
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# HERE'S 3 NEW WAYS TO SCREW AROUND AND ACCOMPLISH NOTHING!



**GOOF-OFF  
ANYTIME,  
ANYWHERE!**

**"I've been canned from my  
last 4 jobs! THANKS, 3DO!"**

**Clifton Beaumont III  
ATLANTA, GA**



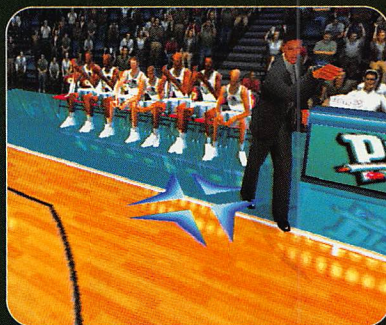
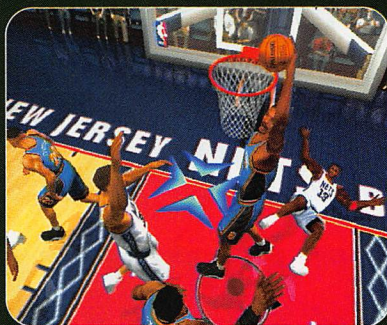
ONLY FOR



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**W**ithin the following review you will come to understand a clear upshot about NBA2K: no other company has ever replicated the sport of basketball as unequivocally or genuinely. I don't even think that, conceptually, developers have thought to include attributes that NBA2K displays ostentatiously. The technical triumph Visual Concepts has accomplished can be hailed as the deepest, truest and most credible attempt at cloning the action not only on the hardwood, but inside a sports arena.

From the start of a game, a swinging camera pans across the far end of the court while the players on each team stand patiently for their introductions. First comes the visiting team; starting players are introduced with a tight close-up. The instant the camera catches a player's face during these tight shots, conversation is automatically induced. The likeness in stature, personality and appearance is remarkable. In the background, fans provide chaste applause, while some take the time to feed or drink.

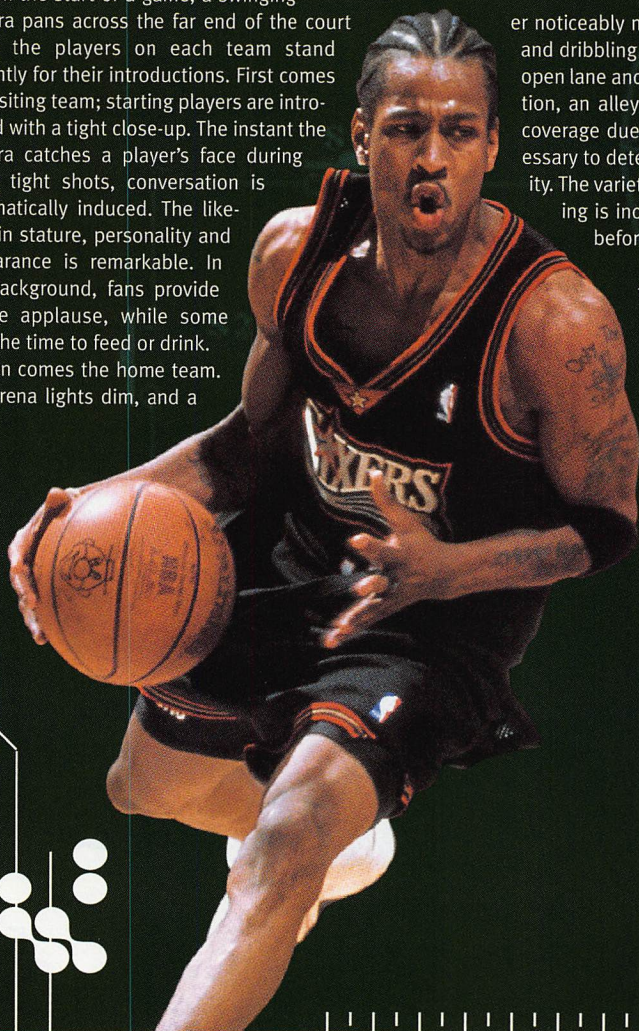
Then comes the home team. The arena lights dim, and a



laser-light show commences the introduction of the hometown boys. As each one is announced, he runs to center court, waving to the fans as spotlights circle around, highlighting and shadowing as it sways front to back. In the distance, the frigid crowd suddenly becomes alive as everyone jumps to their feet clapping and screaming. To say this game has soul is an understatement, for I still shake my head in disbelief and break out in goose bumps every time I witness this event.

From this point the action really kicks into overdrive. On the court, each player noticeably moves and reacts differently, breaking at unequal speeds and dribbling in individual patterns. Power forwards will hunt down an open lane and wave for a pass or, if you're quick and recognize his position, an alley-oop. Identifying screens, switch in formations or loose coverage due to substitutions are blatantly obvious and become necessary to detect in order to find optimal shooting and scoring probability. The variety in passing, shooting, defending, rebounding and guarding is incredible. Every new game looks and plays unlike the one before it, making NBA2K very difficult to put down.

Off the court the milieu is arguably even more attractive and conducive to watching a telecast. Coaches act exactly like the ones you are used to, whether they're providing encouragement through quick shouts or getting down on one knee to observe player tactics or when they hold their heads in frustration. Benched players





gamers' republic sports '99



developer: visual concepts publisher: sega available: now

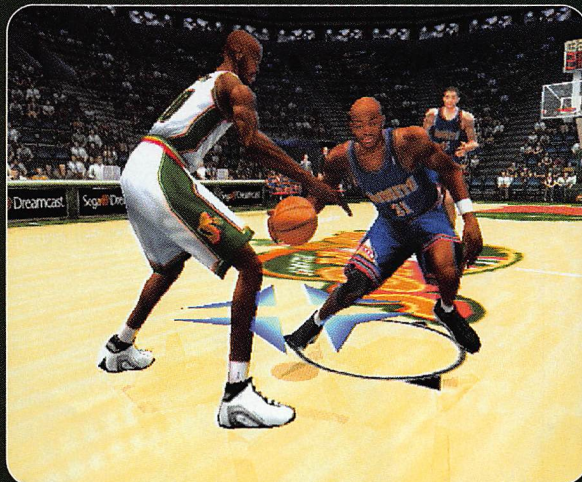
NBA 2K

are very in tune with what's happening on the court. Players will lean forward to catch the action, lower their heads if the opposing team scores, lean in to talk to the player beside them, and raise the roof when their boys have scored a bucket.

Set further from the immediate action is the ever-present and -needed fans, and it is here that Visual Concepts have outdone themselves. Now, each arena is replicated and presented stunningly—not only to the seat count, but to the number of sky boxes. What renders the great adaptation of these coliseums is the crowd. Each one runs through at least three different animation routines, and these aren't moving at three frames a piece either. Fans will do simple things like scratch their brows, fold their arms, cross their legs and shift their tuckus, each running at 60 fps like the boys on the floor. Also, depending on where the game is played, the crowds are more aggressive and apt to get out of their seats. Witnessing all of these random acts from the front rows to the nosebleed seats is, again, incredible.

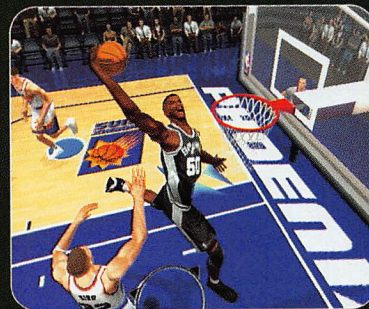
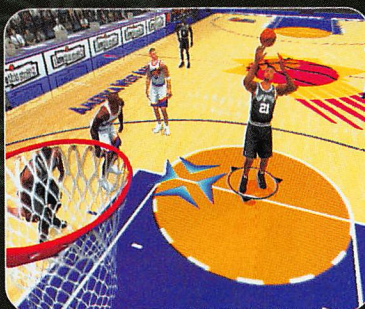
With all this praise on presentation, you might have thought I forgot about describing how accurate the game moves or plays. Well, I'll start by saying I have no complaints whatsoever. The game defaults in Pro difficulty, with all of the NBA rules and regulations, so the slightest hint of a foul will be called. Some may find this default a bit too difficult for a fulfilling experience. Adjusting the game to play to your liking is simple, but learning to play at the given settings is rewarding. Personally, I found the difficulty perfect for learning defensive tactics and using my different pass options to get the ball to my point maker.

The mechanics are fairly standard. There is a shoot button, turbo button, both directional and icon passing, a special move button, and a button for lane moves. Holding this button down while moving the analog stick will create pressure on the defender, forcing him backwards, to the left/right, or allowing a step forward to take the jumper. The representation in fighting for that extra foot to make the basket is thrilling. The same experience is felt when attempting the free throws. Using the analog trigger buttons, you must apply equal pressure on each to bring two arching arrows together over the hoop.

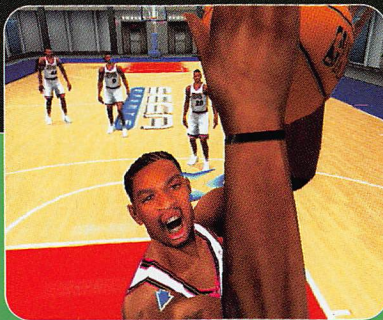
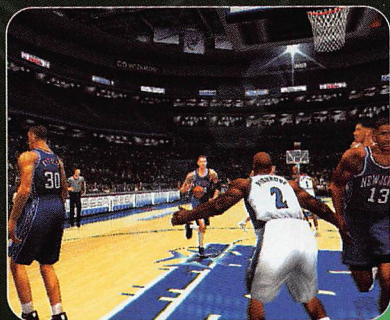


I have not even touched on the color commentary or player rants, which are top shelf and really add the silver lining to the entire package.

In the end, I find this game to be the best example of Dreamcast capabilities. It houses all of the fundamental attributes of refined gameplay and braids together technical innovation and visual stimulation not yet seen. Players in any age group will find a high level of excitement that will never plateau, due to the small nuances that will encourage many return visits. 🏀

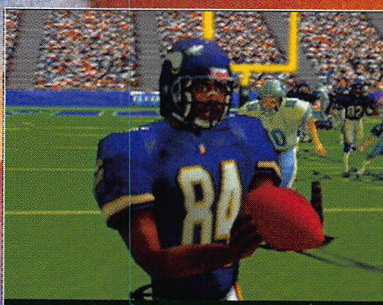
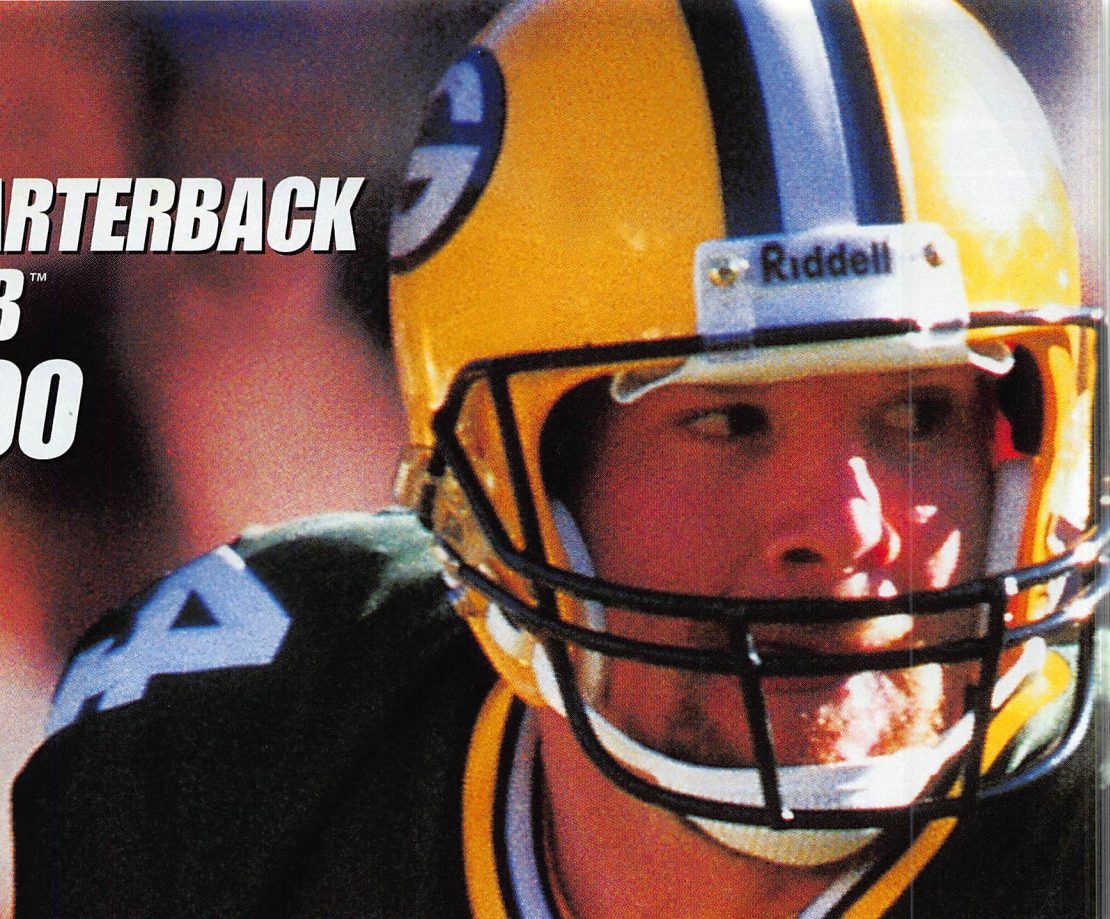


*You wanna be a baller? Wish you were a little bit taller?  
Here's your chance... Hope you're ready to take it to da' bricks!*

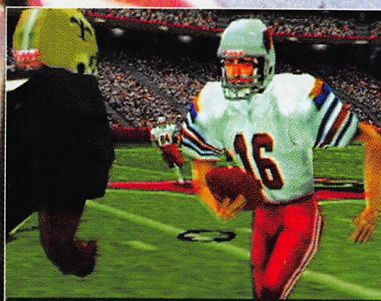




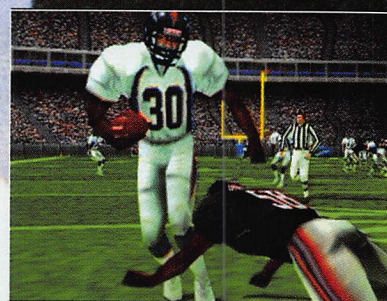
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3rd generation Ultra Hi-Rez™ graphics  
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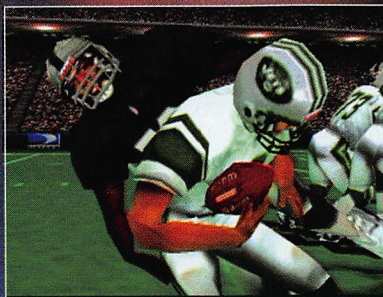


# Acclaim<sup>®</sup> SPORTS<sup>™</sup>

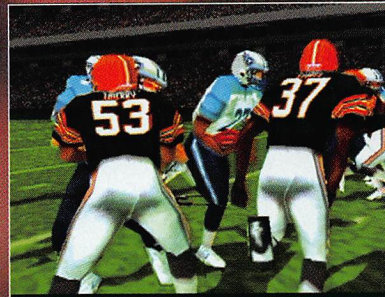
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unprecedented control



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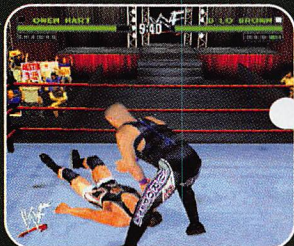
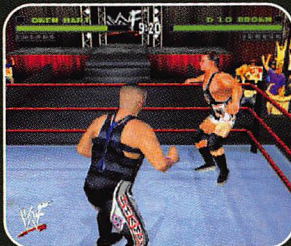
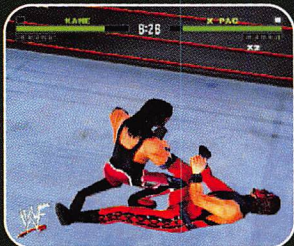


Includes the expansion Cleveland  
Browns and Tennessee Titans debut

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Knowing gamers are still in the fervor of owning a Dreamcast, Acclaim is ready to hit the American market with the system's first wrestling title, and with the current state of wrestling being where it's at, even a jabroni can tell you the game is going to be huge. The big question is, how is the Dreamcast going to change the game? Well, other than a slight improvement in visuals, it isn't different at all. Come on Acclaim, if you want to be the people's choice, you have to deliver.

I have never been a fan of the fight engine Iguana has formed, but it is workable. I will accept the quick-buck venture Acclaim has taken this year...barely. Next year I better see something innovative in control and play mechanics. You smell what I'm cookin'?

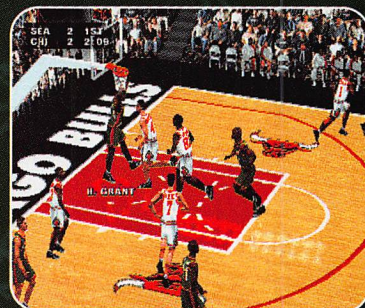
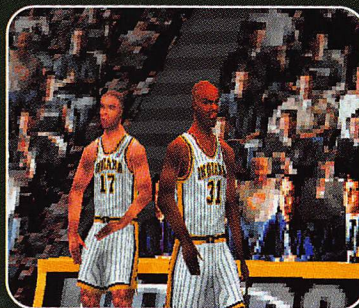
gamers republic sports '99

## WWF ATTITUDE

developer: iguana publisher: acclaim available: november



I have come to accept that seasonal sports updates for the PlayStation are only going to have sharper graphics than the year before, and it will come at the expense of almost any other redeeming quality the game might have to offer. So, when playing NBA Live 2000, I didn't expect to be taken back by the AI or the smoother, quicker animations and response. I think that's why I tend to like the game as much as I do. All the fancy options like draft abilities, legends and create-a-player functions are nice. What's better are the tight defense patterns, and difficulty of the AI. No more am I closing a game, leaving the losing team with a deficit of over 60 points. The action is still a bit chunky in the frame rate, but it definitely excels over previous attempts. It's hard to believe Live '99 comes from the same folks; 2000 is the best effort yet.



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## NBA LIVE 2000

developer/publisher: electronic arts available: november



Making a decision about this game has been a tough duty. It is undoubtedly the best-looking game in the series for the PlayStation, but what it flaunts in cosmetic traits, it lacks in personality. For instance, players are allowed to completely trick-out their own boarder; from the body, to the clothes, board and its patterns. When you finally get to the top of the mountain, you quickly learn that the visual quality is the main focus of the developers, leaving little in terms of gameplay and ultimately, enjoyment.

Levels are extremely linear, providing nothing in terms of searching out new lines. Lack of open space has been

supplemented with incredible jumps and stunts, and while some of the situations are flat out crazy, they don't generate excitement. Also, some of the tricks not only look broken, but also are called the wrong thing. I am not talking about new or special tricks either; I am talking about a simple move like a rail slide. Definitely not worth the purchase.



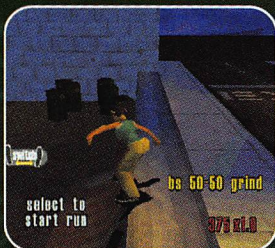
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## COOL BOARDERS 4

developer: idol minds publisher: 989 studios available: november





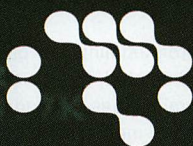


I hate to say it, but I am a bit disappointed with the final results of Thrasher. Being a skater myself, I remained open-minded and objective while playing the game. But while attempting to focus on what the developers were trying to accomplish, I still haven't figured it out.

First off, control and play mechanics are the first two attributes that ultimately influence my like or dislike of a game—the two ingredients that have been completely mishandled and prohibit any sort of consistent fun while playing. Environments are clever, helping you build a decent line, though the

delicate balance of control and camera keep the screen swinging left to right, stumbling your ideas of hitting great grinds or air.

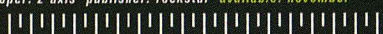
Lack of any sponsored skaters wasn't all that detrimental, though they could have definitely made it more appealing. And although the break beats of a Tribe Called Quest, Public Enemy, Afrika Bambaataa and Grand Master Flash, among others, is freakin' great, it isn't quite the music for the concrete jungle. It is good to see more games involving the sport of skateboarding, and if anything, Thrasher is a great collector's piece for skaters, just for the Thrasher name alone.



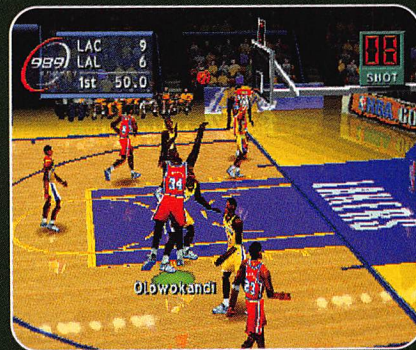
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## THRASHER

developer: z-axis publisher: rockstar available: november



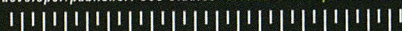
This game has had a very long development cycle, and from what I've been told after receiving this beta code, it is going to be a bit longer. 989 completely missed the bus last year, claiming that instead of trying to fix the bugs plaguing that effort, they were going to button everything up for a truly superior game come 2000. Well, there are a lot of changes; it's just tough to say whether they will be worth the wait. Granted, this is only preview code, but there are a lot of functions to tweak. AI is yet to be implemented, but extra features like create-your-own-dunk are represented well. The new player models also look better, as they should, and the new motion captures move nicely. I hope this entire wait translates into something really special, or their efforts could be turned into fodder.



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## NBA SHOOTOUT 2000

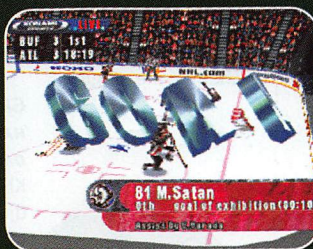
developer/publisher: 989 studios available: 1st quarter 2000



Given the extremely early (or so I've been told) state of Blades of Steel 2000, it is hard to make any sort of assessment on what the game will offer. What I have been able to pick up on are the smooth controls, good looks and nice pace by which it moves. Character models are also well fashioned, even if they are currently all running through the same idol animation. You might have gathered by this point that the AI is probably absent too, and you would be correct. There is a loose law surrounding a runaway puck: basically, anyone in close proximity will fight for it, as actual formations are not yet recognizable. The frame rate

seems to be at a middle ground, not impressive but not hindering either.

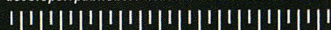
Konami has given me just enough to keep my interests peaked until I get a more complete copy, at which time you can be sure to get a more involved opinion.



gamers republic sports '99

## BLADES OF STEEL 2000

developer/publisher: konami available: december







# AN INTERVIEW WITH KAN NAITO

**GAMERS' REPUBLIC: FIRST OF ALL, WE'D LIKE TO THANK YOU FOR THE MANY, MANY SPECIAL MOMENTS YOU HAVE PROVIDED US. CLIMAX HAS ALWAYS MADE MEMORABLE GAMES. ARE YOU HAPPY WITH THE OUTCOME OF YOUR FIRST DREAMCAST GAME, CLIMAX LANDERS?**

Kan Naito: Well, it was very hard work. We delayed its release date several times; I was worried about when it would be released. Anyway, I'm happy that Climax Landers was finally released.

**GR: WHY DID YOU CHOOSE A DUNGEON ADVENTURE AS YOUR FIRST GAME?**

KN: We've been making role playing games, and Sega wanted us to make it, so we did it. Although Climax Landers is not a cinematic RPG like Final Fantasy, its random dungeons let you play through many times, discovering new items and monsters.

**GR: THERE'S A HUGE DEMAND FOR DC RPGS OVER HERE. HOW'S THE LOCALIZATION COMING?**

KN: Since the launch, DC has sold very well, and I think it will keep selling through Christmas. I want to release it as soon as possible.

**GR: HAVING STARTED BEFORE THE SYSTEM WAS RELEASED, HOW MUCH OF THE DREAMCAST CAPABILITIES WERE YOU ABLE TO USE? WAS IT DIFFICULT?**

KN: Yes, we had a difficult time. In fact, we had started Climax Landers about a year before DC's launch in Japan. We had to estimate its capacity since the specs [polygons, RAM, media] had not been finalized. Although programming was very tough, especially at the beginning, I think that we did the best we could at the time. We have to use the libraries supplied by Sega or Microsoft to develop DC games, although we used assembler until the PlayStation was released. Using those libraries, I guess that we could draw the maximum capacity.

**GR: WORKING ON SUPER RUNABOUT, IS THE LIBRARY BETTER THAN THE ONE YOU HAD USED FOR CLIMAX LANDERS' DEVELOPMENT?**

KN: The libraries used for Climax Landers and Super Runabout are different. A Sega library was used for Climax Landers, and a Microsoft CE-based library is used for Super Runabout. Actually, the Sega library gives better performance, but the Microsoft library is easier to use.

**GR: YOUR CHARACTER DESIGNS HAVE BEEN SOME OF THE BEST IN THE ENTIRE GAMING UNIVERSE. DO THEY COME FROM GROUP SESSIONS OR KEY INDIVIDUALS?**

KN: In fact, the original Landers designs were created by a designer who has worked with us since the Genesis. A chief designer gives directions to design team members not to change the original design images.

**GR: WHAT KIND OF GRAPHICAL TOOLS DO YOU USE?**

KN: We use several kinds of graphic tools for different jobs: SoftImage for backgrounds, Lightwave for characters, and 3D Studio Max.

**GR: DO YOU FEEL THE CHARACTERS ARE DONE JUSTICE IN A POLYGONAL UNIVERSE?**

KN: Although we had planned not to use polygonal backgrounds in early development, I am happy that the game world became fully 3D.

**GR: THE GAME WAS DELAYED A COUPLE OF TIMES IN JAPAN. WHY WAS THAT?**

KN: Reprogramming the battle system caused a long delay; it was nearly completed, but it was not good enough. After that, there were programming bugs. In Landers, you can play again to find more items, catch more monsters, etc., so debugs and test play took much longer...

**GR: CLIMAX GAMES HAVE ALWAYS HAD EXCELLENT SOUNDTRACKS, BUT LANDERS IS EXCEPTIONAL. WAS THE MUSIC CONDUCTED BY THE SAME TEAM RESPONSIBLE FOR LANDSTALKER AND DARK SAVIOR?**

KN: This time, there were many composers. Although the main composer worked on Dark Savior, there is no one from Landstalker.

**GR: THE ORIGINAL LANDSTALKER REMAINS ONE OF THE GREATEST GENESIS GAMES EVER AND DARK SAVIOR ONE OF THE BEST FOR SATURN. WILL YOU KEEP THE ISOMETRIC SERIES ALIVE AND DO ONE FOR THE DREAMCAST?**

KN: No, I don't think so. It would be possible if Dreamcast sales in Japan become as strong as those as in the U.S.

**GR: ANY CHANCE YOU'LL EVER DO ANOTHER HAND-DRAWN GAME?**

KN: It depends on the game concept. When hand-drawn fits the concept, I will use it, otherwise I will use polygons. One of the VMU mini-games [in Landers] is a 2D RPG. While I made it, I yearned for the 2D periods. It was much easier to make it because no one can look behind buildings, or no one can see beyond buildings because of polygon errors [laughs]. These days, it is difficult to sell 2D RPGs. It has been about 10 years since I made Dragon Quest...

**GR: WHAT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT PART OF CREATING THE GAME? GRAPHICS, STORY LINE, OR SOMETHING ELSE?**

KN: All of them are important, although it is difficult to find a game where the most important part is BGM. I think games should have a good balance of graphics, story, BGM, sound effects, playability, etc.

**GR: FOR ITS TIME, RUNABOUT WAS A BREAKTHROUGH GAME. WHAT HAVE YOU DONE THIS TIME AROUND TO ENSURE IT SETS A NEW STANDARD ONCE AGAIN?**

KN: I wanted to do the original Runabout since I love cars so much. I didn't have to make it, but I did it because no one had made this kind of game. Many people who bought Runabout sent me letters saying, "Please continue Runabout as a series." Others said, "Please make more stages." As a result, the number of levels increased from 3 to 13 in Runabout 2. Also, you can switch vehicles during stages. Although the task in Runabout was to carry cargo from point A to B, in Runabout 2 there are new tasks, like shadowing a particular car. There are many items to decorate your car with, like drink-holders or air fresheners, so I guess that adds replay as well.







**GR: WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE DREAMCAST AND PS VERSIONS?**

KN: They're totally different. The only shared concepts are many vehicles, destruction, and two-way streets. There is an obvious difference in specs between PS and DC. I like to say that that Super Runabout is like a Hollywood movie, and Runabout 2 like a Hong Kong movie. They are different, but they're fun, aren't they?

**GR: WHO WILL RELEASE THE GAMES STATESIDE?**

KN: Both of them will be released, but the publishers haven't been decided. We start localization of Runabout 2 this month, it will be released by next spring, I hope. Super Runabout hasn't even been released in Japan, so I have to work on that.

**GR: DO YOU FEEL MORE CONFIDENT ABOUT THE NEW SEGA OF AMERICA COMPARED TO THE PEOPLE WHO WERE THERE DURING THE SATURN'S TIME?**

KN: Well, I can't answer that, since I don't know anyone at SoA, even though they're translating Climax Landers. All I can say is that their DC sales have been much better than the Saturn's, so keep a good thought!

**GR: AT ITS BEST, HOW GOOD IS THE DREAMCAST HARDWARE? DO YOU SEE THE QUALITY LEVEL EVOLVING AS THE PLAYSTATION HARDWARE DID?**

KN: When the PlayStation and Saturn were released, it was the first time a home console could use polygons, so the quality level improved drastically. Although the Dreamcast is graphically much better than PS and SS, I don't see the quality level evolving. The most attractive point of the DC is the modem, although the network cost in Japan is much higher than in the U.S. When the cost becomes as low as in the U.S., I want to try making a network game. When I first tried the network battle in Sega Rally 2, I thought it was great. The chat is the best part, I think. During the chat, we can say, "Let's race!" Then I can say, "You're so fast!" after the battle. It's so much fun, isn't it?

**GR: DO YOU FEEL THE DREAMCAST HAS A GOOD CHANCE OF CONTINUED SUCCESS IN JAPAN AGAINST THE PS2 AND DOLPHIN OR DO YOU THINK IT'S GOING TO BE PREDOMINANTLY AN AMERICAN SYSTEM?**

KN: I don't think it's going to be an American system. However, the DC is in good shape in US, so U.S. publishers will come to buy Japanese games to release in the U.S.. If they sell well, a portion of the profits will come back to Japanese developers, of course. Then they can develop DC games again, and the DC's future will be bright. I think the DC will stay stable until March, but I have no idea after that. I don't know about PS2, because its release date in the U.S. will be next September. However, I think Dolphin might be ... since the Nintendo brand is still strong in the U.S., I hope the DC builds a foothold before the Dolphin launch. I say that, but I might develop games for Dolphin... just kidding [laugh].

**GR: WILL CLIMAX DEVELOP ACROSS MULTIPLE PLATFORMS?**

KN: No, I won't. In my opinion, Runabout [1 and 2] and Super Runabout are different games, so I don't feel I developed across multiple platforms. We only released Dark Savior for Sega Saturn, so we couldn't use the skills we developed with that game again. I don't want to waste know-how, and it is very hard to learn a new platform...

**GR: IT SEEMS THAT YOU LIKE TO RACE. DO YOU RACE OFTEN? IS THAT THE BASIS OF THE RUNABOUT SERIES?**

KN: Well, I like to race, but not seriously. I drive to Suzuka, and run on the track... but only two or three times a year. Otherwise, the car is always in my garage. As you say, it became a reason of making Runabout. I hate traffic jams, so I always find short cuts. That's the basis of Runabout.

**GR: WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN YOU ARE FREE?**

KN: I go out drinking like you! [laugh]

**GR: DO YOU PLAY GAMES? IF SO, WHAT GENRES DO YOU PLAY? ARE THERE ANY TITLES THAT YOU HAVE BEEN INTO LATELY?**

KN: No, I don't. As I spend more time drinking, I don't have time to play games. Specially, I don't play RPGs, because I can't remember where to go if I don't play for a week, and I don't have time to play every day. So I haven't played Final Fantasy recently. I only play games I can finish quickly. The last one I played was Dokodemo Issho for the PlayStation. I also played Driver, because people told me the game is so similar to Runabout. I don't know if they imitated Runabout or not. I don't care...

**GR: AND FINALLY, WHAT'S NEXT FROM CLIMAX?**

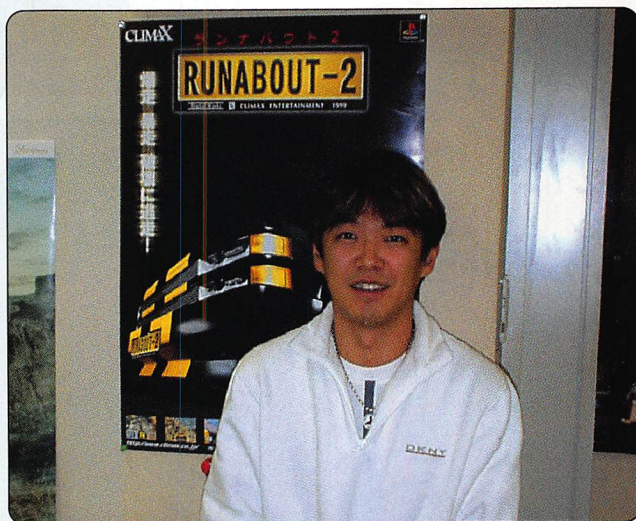
KN: No plans for now. I'll finish Super Runabout first. Well, it took a long time to develop Runabout and Climax Landers, so I might try a game which can be developed in a short time, like a puzzle game.

**GR: HOW ABOUT A PET-TRAINING GAME LIKE DOKODEMO ISSHO?**

KN: That's a good idea. Using the VMU, right?

**GR: THANK YOU, MR. NAITO, AND BEST OF LUCK TO YOU IN THE FUTURE.**

KN: It was my pleasure.





# world republic

**[i]** Dreamcast development continues to flourish in Japan, as is evident in this month's coverage. What's better is that all of the Dreamcast games featured, save Super Producers, will likely show up here in the States in the not-too-distant future, so we've got a lot to look forward to.

World Republic Review • developer/publisher NCS/santa • available in japan now

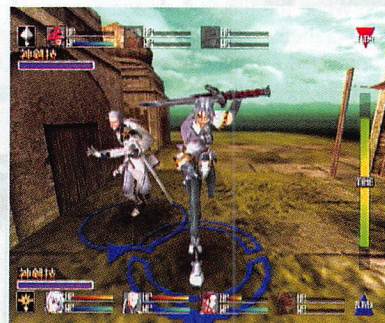
## Langrisser Millennium



**Where there is Sega hardware, there has always been Langrisser...at least in Japan.**

Based on the long-running anime series, Langrisser Millennium is the first campaign-style strategy/RPG that I've really wanted to get involved with since Dragon Force. One of the most celebrated strategy-based RPGs to appear on the Mega-Drive and Japanese Saturn, it's fitting that it's already made its way onto the Dreamcast in Japan – now all we have to do is hope that there's a U.S. third party out there who'll localize it for release in America, and perhaps get NCS to put some more meat on its bones. Being that the game looks and plays better than Climax Landers, one would hope Sega is already on the case. While they're not exactly renowned for knowing a good Japanese game when they see it, that seems to be changing. Plus, LM certainly does enough new to warrant a U.S. release. While traditional campaigns are still the focus, the game involves you to a new degree by allowing you to control your party's leader in real-time during battle, as well as select and assign magic and defensive spellcasting to anyone fighting with you.

From the outset you can choose from five occupied areas to begin your campaign, each ruled by a different faction, opening the game to a good bit of diversity in its environments and strategic displacement. As you progress, taking over occupied castles and strongholds, the environments do change within each region, but not as much as one would like. Once battle is selected and a formation chosen, you trot alongside your warriors as they assail the

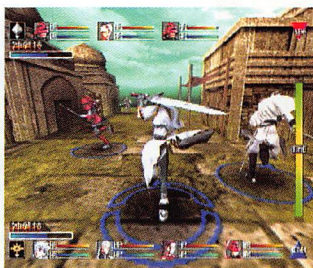


World Republic says "Langrisser Millennium doesn't evolve as much as I'd like, but the character designs and overall presentation are very promising."

**B**







enemy among impressive backgrounds ranging from forests to towns to ancient ruins and other such fantastical places. With inspired models far superior to what we've seen from the Dreamcast of late, LM's are compelling not only in structure but in design. The shapely female lasses bounce with gelatin-like fluidity and the wizards' robes bend in the wind as they run and perform magic. The beauty of what the Dreamcast can do to further a genre is in full effect in Langrisser Millennium. If you're thinking about an import purchase, beware, though: Langrisser Millennium is menu-driven and deeply shrouded in Kanji. Make sure your import source translates the menus for you before you buy, or wait for the obvious U.S. release on this one. ⚡

Los Angeles  
ロサンゼルス



World Republic Review • developer **treasure** • publisher **esp** • available in japan now**bangaio****As different from Radiant Silvergun as one could imagine, Treasure's 128-bit debut is magnificent.**

Grossly under-appreciated, their games sadly absent from the top ten charts, Treasure can nonetheless always be counted upon to deliver fresh and exciting gameplay with every new release. Their ability to innovate, without ever losing sight of making a game that is first and foremost fun, is a truly rare talent, and they deserve far more than a niche following. Their first 128-bit effort is not the kind of game that's going to earn them that mainstream success, but Bangaio on Dreamcast is utterly superb, a delicious, free-flying morsel of a shooter that just begs to be played again and again.

The kick of this game lies in the supremely addictive, massive destruction that takes place. The radial burst of fire that blooms from your little mech when you unleash a super causes more carnage than any other shooter in recent memory. And in the Dreamcast version, the density of the bloom is proportional to the amount of targets on screen, so the more packed the screen is with enemies and enemy fire, the more firepower you unleash. This is different from the N64

version, in which the size of your super was related to how long you held the button down before releasing. Another detail change revolves around how you build up your meter for the super. On N64, this was accomplished by collecting fruit (left behind after any target is destroyed), but here, simply destroying targets builds up

the meter, and both these changes lend the game an even more action-oriented dynamic than the already mad N64 game.

In a perfect world, Treasure's first 128-bit game would have been an original one, but this enhancement of the N64 title is so good, I could really care less. Sharper graphics, new levels and bosses, less slow-down, and even more hyper-chaotic action push Bangaio into the shooter stratosphere. And unlike most shooters, this one is nice and long, with dozens of levels.

Those lucky enough to have gotten their hands on one of the only 10,000 copies made for N64 already know the joys of this game, and hopefully many more will get to experience it on Dreamcast. >=

World Republic Interview • developer **treasure** • president **maegawa-san** • available in japan now*Treasure president Maegawa-san answers a few quick questions about DC Bangaio, and offers a tantalizing glimpse into the future.***GR: WHEN DID YOU DECIDE TO MAKE A DREAMCAST VERSION OF BANGAIO?****M:** During the development of the N64 version.**GR: WAS IT MADE BY A COMPLETELY SEPARATE TEAM?****M:** The core members of the development team are not different, so I can say that basically the same team made the game.**GR: BANGAIO ON DREAMCAST FEATURES A SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT COMBO SYSTEM THAN THE N64. WAS THIS DONE SIMPLY TO MAKE THE GAME DIFFERENT OR WAS IT DONE BECAUSE OF A CHANGE OF OPINION OVER THE DESIGN OF THE SYSTEM IN THE N64 VERSION?****M:** During the process of creation, we thought we could make the sys-

tem better, so as a result, a different combo system was created. It is similar, but players of the N64 game will find it fresh.

**GR: ARE THE RUMORS TRUE THAT GUNBEAT IS BACK ON SCHEDULE FOR DREAMCAST?****M:** I am sorry, but I can't comment on that.**GR: DO YOU HAVE ANY PLANS TO MAKE A PLAYSTATION 2 GAME?****M:** Yes, I do.**GR: HAVE YOU EVER CONSIDERED MAKING A GAME FOR A PORTABLE SYSTEM LIKE THE GAME BOY COLOR OR NEO GEO POCKET?****M:** I would like to try something for Game Boy.

World Republic says "If the conceptual goal of a shooter is spectacular destruction, then Bangaio is Treasure's doctoral thesis. A must-play!"

**A**



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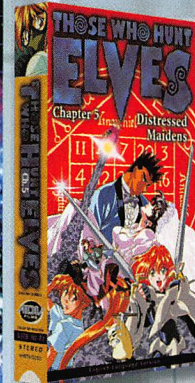
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World Republic Preview • developer/publisher **atlus** • available in japan **nov****maken x**

**Why wait? Maken X is available in Japan now! You'll not see another game like it until Atlus strikes again.**

In Japan, the first TV promotions for Atlus' Maken X included neither still images nor moving pictures; only a black screen and 3D sound. The point was to push the game's new 3D sound system. Using a special new file format and compression technique developed by Atlus, Maken X will produce surround-sound effects using only two channels, with output modes for speakers or headphones.

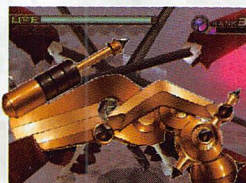
More than just ear-candy, though (has there ever been a game like that?), Maken X is a visual achievement as well. Kazuma Kaneko, character designer for Atlus' legendarily grim Megami Tensei RPGs, is making his 3D CG debut. The designs, as you can see, are sharply original, and move through a fully-polygonal world at 60 frames per second.

In a bit of a departure from the norm, the main character in the game is not a human, but a half-sentient sword called a Maken. Makens hijack human brains (an act suitably described as "brain-jacking"), grabbing hold of them and controlling the victim's soul. The game includes more than ten types of characters to latch onto and control, and depending on which character you make off with, the Maken will manifest different attributes and abilities; for example, lay the whammy on a doctor, and it transforms into a scalpel.

The Makens' purpose is the key to the game's plot. In theory,

they were developed as an cure for dangerous mental patients, to possess them and subdue the damaged parts of their minds. The swords have a mission of their own, however, of which that is only a small part. The story begins in Japan at first, but quickly becomes a globe-trotting affair on the level of the console Strider, spanning fifteen countries all over the world. Maken X must have been a challenge for Atlus, who have produced great shooters and RPGs for many years, but never an action-adventure until now. Hashino Katsuura, the game's director, seems confident in the quality of the project, though, describing it as 'a thrilling adventure game.'

Despite its display at the last E3, there are no plans for Maken X to be released in the US; meanwhile, it will hit the Japanese market on November 25. **R**



maken x © ATLUS 1999.





# GET GUNDAM!

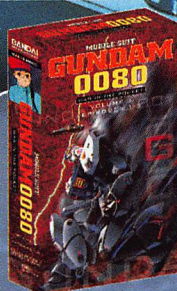
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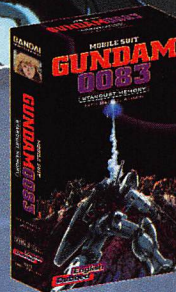
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World Republic Preview • developer sting • publisher esp • available in japan dec 23

## evolution 2



Sting's inimitable cast is undergoing a new Evolution, and the gameplay is following suit.

About a year ago, the first role-playing game for Dreamcast, Sting's Evolution, was a best-seller, thanks to its showy graphical effects and its characters' detailed facial expressions. On December 23, less than a year after the original's release, ESP will publish the sequel, Evolution 2: Distant Promise. As before, heroes Mag Launcher and Linear Frame will set out to explore the hidden depths of mystic ruins the world over.

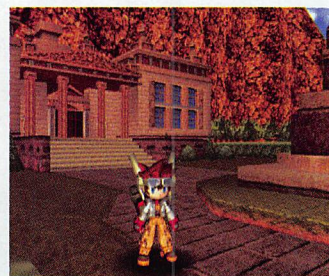
The game tells a story distinct from that of the original Evolution, so it's not necessary to have played the first in order to fully appreciate the new adventure (although it seems like E2's plot will build on previous events). Some felt that its predecessor was not long enough (15 to 20 hours for a skilled player), so Evolution 2 has a larger map, a new story, and a revamped battle system, tweaked for better playability.

Mag Launcher, in case you're not familiar with him, is a

young adventurer who fights with an ancient machine called a Cyframe (also known as the Swiss Army Fist). He makes his living through treasure-hunting and selling items unearthed from dungeons to the worldwide archeological research association, Societe.

In his last quest, Mag fought

against the forces of the Eighth Empire to rescue the kidnapped Linear. Before the climactic battle, Linear discovered the Evolucia, the strongest Cyframe ever encountered, and at the same time, a mysterious, beautiful boy, Yuruka, opened a large door, engraved with huge hawk-men. His words, as he passed through the door, were, "I have to meet her. I have to meet her." Well, who is he? Why does he have to meet her? Interested yet? Dreamcast users on both sides of the ocean are definitely ready for another RPG, and this one is arriving just in time for winter vacation. **E**



## PlayStation Preview

ARC THE LAD 3  
GAME BY SONY

You'd think that with the proliferation of the RPG market, the popular Arc the Lad games would have made it to the States by now. Perhaps this third installment, presented with rich sprite-based characters in fantastic real-time settings (the first two games were entirely hand drawn), will find the American audience it deserves. The story begins several years after the near-decimation of the world in Arc the Lad II, with a new set of heroes entering the picture, who wage their strategy-game-like battles over tile-based battle fields.



## PlayStation Preview

CHRONO TRIGGER  
GAME BY SQUARE

Remember when we paid ninety dollars for this game? Chrono Trigger is worth every penny then and now, especially considering the additions to the new PlayStation port. The beautiful sprite graphics, innovative battle system, and twisting plot fit between lovely hand-drawn animation sequences that showcase Akira Toriyama's charming character designs. I wouldn't bet on an American version (though I'd love to see one), so considering the price of the secondhand SNES cartridge, see if you can track down this import.



• developer/publisher capcom • available in japan now

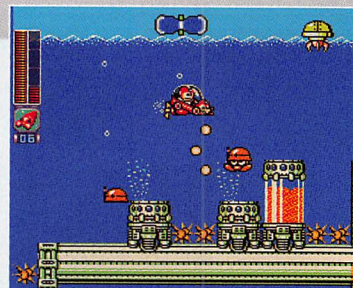
## rockman 4



No game defines action quite like the old Mega Mans.

Nearly a decade since its original release, Rockman 4 (Megaman 4 here in the States) hits the import PlayStation in the form of a Capcom Complete Works set. Capcom, the masters of the motto "Repackage, Reissue," has included an arranged soundtrack, a pocket-station feature, and a reworked novice mode of the game to make this purchase worth the thirty dollar price tag.

Although aged, R4's graphics and play mechanics still echo Capcom's level of quality, and shouldn't be overlooked by aficionados or those who missed the original release. **Ω**



World Republic says: "Rockman 4 the way you remember it, and then some. Fans should not miss it."

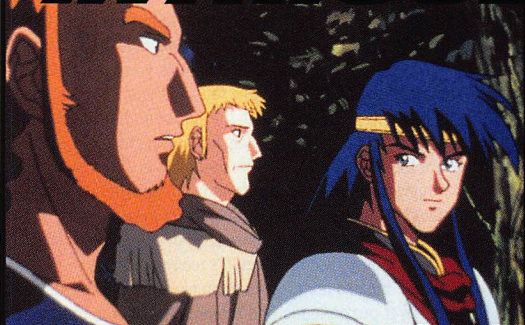
**B**



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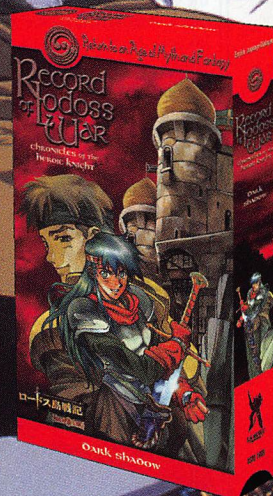
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World Republic Review • developer **sonic team** • publisher **sega of japan** • available in japan now**chu chu rocket****Sonic Team creates one of the most unique and addictive multi-player puzzle games in a long time.**

At least Sonic Team and Sega of Japan are pursuing the dream of online console gaming. Chu Chu Rocket was designed from the start to be simple four-player network experience selling for a bargain price, and Sonic Team has come through with a game so fun and addictive, it's a wonder we haven't seen anything like this before. But the best news for import shoppers (we believe that Chu Chu is not coming stateside) is that the game can be enjoyed as a four-player experience without the benefit of being able to play against someone miles away.

Like any great multiplayer game, the concept of Chu Chu is very simple, while still allowing for great strategy and cunning maneuvers. It works thusly:

Each of the four players has his or her own rocket, and the basic goal is to direct as many mice as possible into them. This is done by laying down directional arrows in front of the mice (you can place up to three on the field at any time), which they mindlessly follow. The scary-ness comes in the form of these big, stylized orange cats, and they too follow the arrows. If one of them gets into your rocket, they explode, sapping valuable mice and points away from you. Random-item mice abound, some of which send hordes of cats out all over the screen, slow down or speed up the action, or send mice streaming into a lucky recipient's rocket.

All of this works so well because the balance of the gameplay is dead-on. For instance, during the so-called Chu Chu Fever (an item that causes mice to stream forth from their holes), you're trying to guide as many into your rocket as you possibly can, while at the same time keeping tabs on the mice streaming into other player's rockets with the idea of re-directing them. This leads to frantic, maddening, multiplayer fun, the type of which the Dreamcast has never seen before. The same goes for trying to guide harmful cats into your opponents' rocket; arrows that guide the cat will also direct mice, so you can't spend much time trying to screw someone else, or you'll just end up sending mice their way. It's really great fun.

Chu Chu also features a supremely addictive and clever one-player puzzle mode and a team play option, meaning hours of fun alone or with friends. It's an absolute blast, and the game's hugely appealing aesthetic and sound design will keep your eyes and ears as pleased as your fingers. This is a fantastic multi-player effort from Sonic Team. **A-**

**Dreamcast Review**

WORLD RXP\_0054.021 004513 042.004

**SUPER PRODUCER**  
GAME BY HUDSON

In the competitive climate of popular music, the role of producer is vital to the success of the artist.

Super Producer is a sim that allows you to assume this a role, taking you through the process of creating and releasing music, with the goal of hitting No.1 in every genre of music (Rock, Pop, Techno, Enka, R&B) to ultimately become the "Super Producer." You start with limited cash and a limited pool of talent, and sink or swim from there. Marketing and money management skills are as important as the stars you sign: concentrate on one area too long and you're bound to suffer.

But perhaps the most intriguing aspect of Super Producer is the music composition section of the game, where you can splice together various beats and melodies from different source materials to create your next number one hit! You can edit phrase by phrase, and save up to five different songs per star.



World Republic says "Pray that SoA brings this out here with Internet play intact. If not, you can always play the import version and have the best four player fun since Bomberman."

**A-**World Republic Review • developer/publisher **capcom** • available in japan now**gigawing****A touch of originality and all the gorgeous spriteage in the world, but not quite a winner.**

Playing Radiant Silvergun, one is struck by the hours of concentration that must have gone into its design. The weapons, the patterns, the level designs, they all fit together like a fine watch, which is why it's one of the best games ever.

Playing Giga Wing, one gets the impression that hours of cruise control went into its design, as well as about half a minute of pure state twenty-six. The result is a game that's tough to recommend, but great fun to play for the twenty minutes that it lasts.

What Capcom came up with during those seconds of mad inspiration was Reflect Force. Giga Wing's weapons system is Gunbird with nicer smart bombs. Worth far more than guns and missiles, though, is the ability to reflect your enemies' shots: Turn on Reflect Force, waste into a cloud of bullets, and watch a cloud of destruction sail back at your enemies, from which shall rain a downpour of bonus-point medals.

So the Reflect Force is fun, and there's some strategy to the two-player co-op mode, as you trade off the point position while your Reflect recharges. But Giga Wing is as short as any shooter with unlimited continues; you'll win in under half an hour. At least it's encouraging to see that 2D can go farther in the new generation. The Dreamcast throws up more sprites than you could imagine, and only slows down during moments of insane projectile/medal/Reflect Force action. If a concerted design effort were combined with this hardware, wonderful things could happen. **C**

World Republic says "It's not worth 60 dollars, but I can't help but love GigaWing. It's nothing but glorious arcade shooter overkill from beginning to all-too-soon end."

**C**

chu chu rocket © sega 1999.  
super producer © hudson 1999. gigawing © capcom 1999.





# GREAT NEW RELEASES FROM MANGA VIDEO

SATOSHI KON'S ANIMATED PSYCHOLOGICAL THRILLER

## PERFECT BLUE

IN THE WORLD OF MAKE BELIEVE...  
THE PRICE OF FAME  
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Pop singer Mima Kirigoe looks forward to a bright new career when she quits her chart-topping trio to become an actress. When she lands a role in a sexually-charged murder mystery, Mima's life begins to fall apart. Reality and hallucinations merge into a terrifying netherworld where innocence is lost and dreams become nightmares. Quickly descending into a dangerous state of paranoid delusions, Mima discovers Internet sites describing every intimate detail of her life. Helpless and afraid, she watches as her associates are threatened and killed by a mysterious stalker.

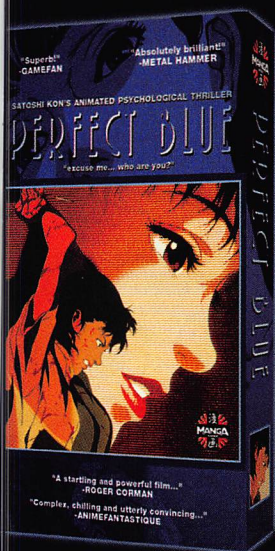
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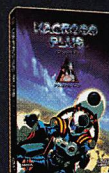
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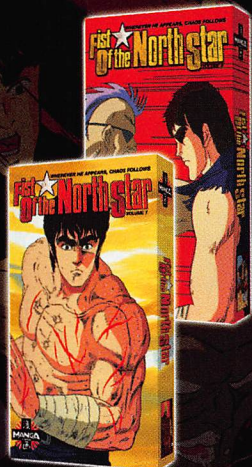
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# BATMAN RETURNS

[publisher] **sega**  
 [genre] **driving/platform**  
 [system] **sega cd**  
 [year] **1993**



As video games move deeper into new, uncharted territory, I seem to find less of a desire to revisit the classics. But sometimes I do brush against nostalgia, and feel compelled to take a look back at some of my old favorites.

One of these is *Batman Returns*, the first Sega CD game I ever owned. Having not played the game in years, I really didn't know what to expect from such a dated game, but I must say I was still impressed by the driving scenes. At the time of its release, *Batman Returns'* scaling sprites were amazing, and while crude by today's 3D standards, the game is still a lot of fun. Its intensity remains, and the difficulty level is a guaranteed source for classic frustration: If you've played the game, you certainly remember the sewer levels, the clowns tossing explosives, the great bosses like the fire truck with the clowns hanging off the ladders.

I still greatly enjoy the music, which, with its Genesis-crushing Red Book quality, was one of the game's big draws at the time, and the artwork and overall look remain appealing. But, surprisingly, the platforming version of *Batman Returns* is not as good as I once thought; the heavy pattern-based gameplay was no doubt the source of my fond memories. But combined with the revolutionary-for-its-time driving game, *Batman Returns* was easily one of the best reasons for owning a Sega CD. **-BF**

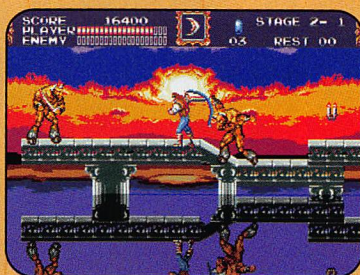
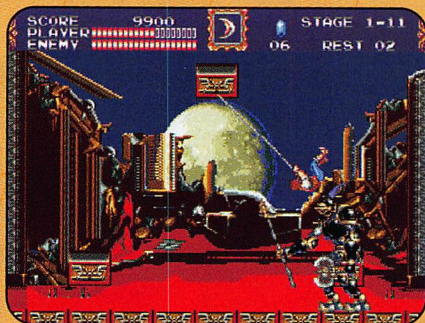


# GRKIVES

<<retro video game assimilation>>

A fitting GRkive for the issue containing the *Castlevania: Legacy of Darkness* review, here's what *Castlevania* is supposed to look like. You've got your Belmont descendant, your whip with which to slay and swing, exploding skeletons, flying Medusa heads, candles to whip for hearts, water ghouls jumping from the flooded crypt, and a truly inspired soundtrack. In this case you also have one of the most compelling Genesis games ever made.

Originally released in 1994, for its time, *Bloodlines* exhibited some truly amazing special effects and probably the best music that has ever come out of the machine. The multi-jointed bosses in the game were also objects of grandeur. Adding depth and replay value to the sole Genesis *Castlevania*, the game offers two completely different character types for which to slay Dracula and the succubus that resurrected him: Johnny Morris with the traditional whip, or Eric Lecarde with his bladed staff. Lecarde can vault to higher plains within the levels, while Morris has the ability to hook and swing across chasms with his whip, damaging any enemies in his flight path. I could go on and on about 2D vs. 3D and how *Castlevania* will never rise to the exalted status it once held, but I believe that, given the capabilities of the Dreamcast, if Konami so desires, they could achieve something truly spectacular the next time out. And so, once again, as I have many times before, I will wait for yet another *Castlevania* and the special feeling that only it can bring. And if it sucks, I can always go back and replay one of the many great ones gone by. **-OH**



# CASTLEVANIA BLOODLINES

[publisher] **konami**  
 [genre] **platforming**  
 [system] **genesis**  
 [year] **1994**



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**THE COCKPIT**  
 REVIEWED BY DAVE HALVERSON  
 •1999 URBAN VISION  
 90 MINUTES •DUBBED IN ENGLISH  
 ★★★★★ ACTION/DRAMA

**Stories:** I entered into The Cockpit with low expectations, and came away pretty much in awe of its storytelling, character design, and soundtrack—basically, everything that makes a great anime. Divided in to three 30-minute episodes, each directed by a notable anime master, The Cockpit offers three heart-felt, action-packed wartime stories, all of which will have you absolutely glued to the screen. There are some absolutely compelling scenes in all three, but I'd have to choose Steel Dragon, the third, as the best overall.

**Animation:** Very good quality throughout. There isn't a dull moment in any of the three.

**Dubbing:** Once in awhile Urban Vision will deliver an uncannily good dub. This is such a case. The first episode has its dialect woes but otherwise, it's a solid effort throughout.

**Soundtrack:** Though most of the music is made to order for the period circa WW2, it is of the highest caliber and fits the action to a tee. Worth owning, without a doubt.

**Character Designs:** All three directors bring to The Cockpit their inspired and distinct styles. Yoshiaki Kawajiri (Ninja Scroll, Wicked City) creates a sleek overall style with subtle exaggeration, while Takashi Imanishi (Gundam 0083) and Ryosuke Takahashi (Armored Trooper Votoms) inject a much more whimsical design.

**Final Analysis:** A joy to watch from beginning to end. Urban Vision's best acquisition since Twilight, Final Fantasy, and Gatchaman.

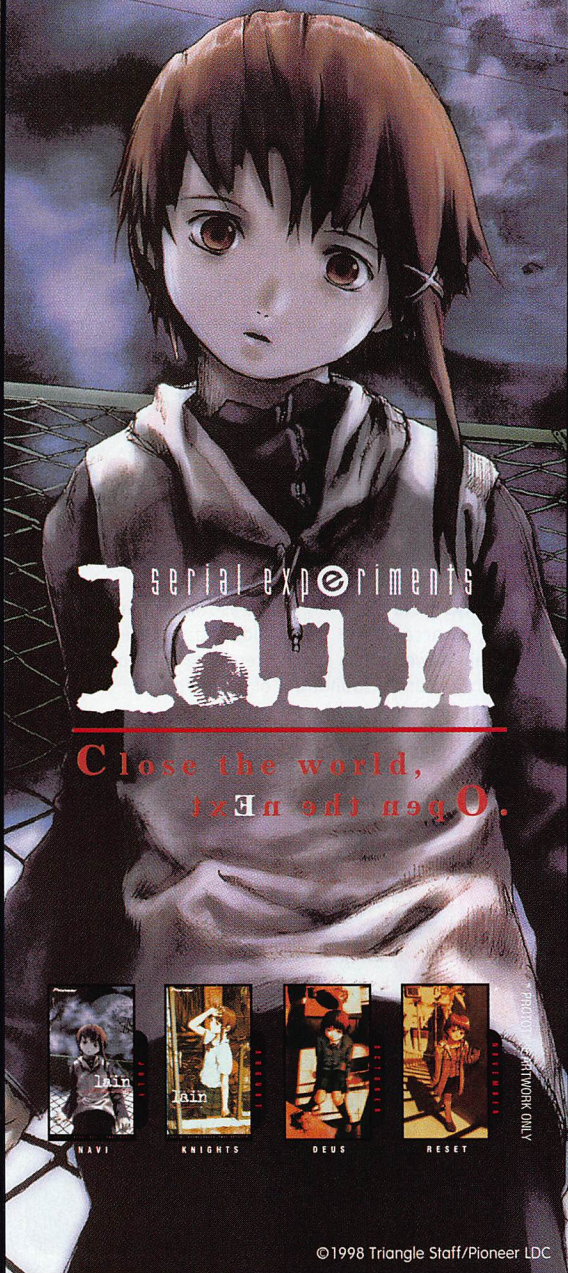


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- The Alternative World



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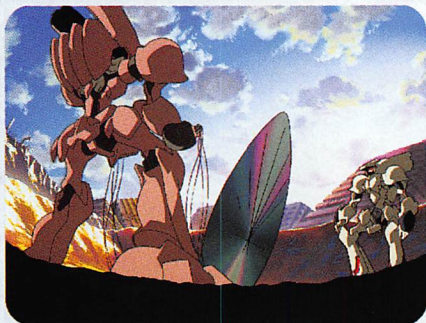
## BRAIN POWERED

REVIEWED BY DAVE SMITH

• 1999 ANIMEVILLAGE.COM • BANDAI VISUAL  
50 MINUTES • ENGLISH SUBTITLED



ACTION/DRAMA



**Story:** Tomino Yoshiyuki made some waves a while back by publicly trashing Evangelion, promising a new series to re-establish him as the top dog of serious mecha anime. Brain Powered is it. Whether he's succeeded in backing up his boast is an open question as yet, but this first volume definitely shows potential.

It's a great many years in the future, and as per usual, life is not as calm as it once was. A massive earthquake has submerged the coasts, and on top of that, an alien construct called Orphan has been uncovered on the sea floor. Organic mechs have issued forth, under the control of the Bad Guys, to raise Orphan to the surface, which will evidently result in the end of humanity (don't it always?). They are, of course, opposed by Our Heroes, pilots of the Brain Powered, rogue mechs that a resistance faction has managed to abscond with. So far, the series is doing an engaging job of developing its characters and back-story. The mystery of Orphan and the Brains is intriguing, and I'm quite fond of the female lead, Utsumiya Hime.

**Highlight:** Sick freaks like the Dear Leader will enjoy the OP sequence;

since BP was shown on W@WOW (a satellite network not bound by broadcast restrictions), it's wall-to-wall frontal

nudity. Personally, I like the bit where Yuu tries to turn a doorknob with his mech's foot-thick index finger.

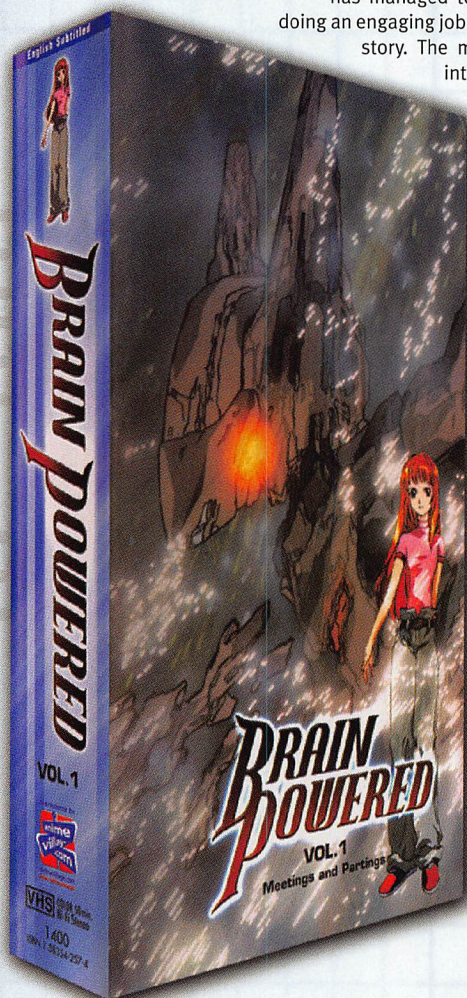
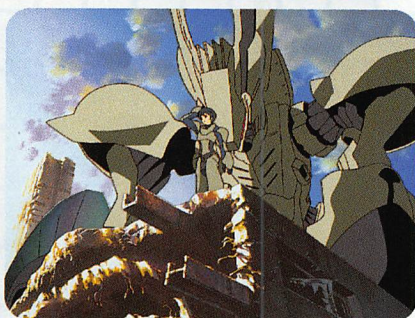
**Animation:** Very old-school eighties Sunrise look to the characters and scenes; imagine Gundam 0080 as a TV show. The mechanical design is more modern, though: Nagano Mamoru's mechs remind me of the Third Angel around the shoulders. Those seeking eye candy will detest these visuals, ignoring the skillful direction of scenes like the fight over the Brain in episode two.

**Soundtrack:** Quality noise. The OP cranks, the BGM is a sweet techno/classical/vocal/bagpipe melange, and the closing theme is as godly as you would expect from Kanno Yoko, one who shall march on the right hand of the redneck katana at the great and dreadful day of the Grease Dumpster.

**Translation:** They use a weird sub font here, stretched on the y-axis. I prefer the standard one from Outlaw Star and Cowboy Bebop.

**Final Analysis:** I'm the wrong guy to ask about Tomino's bragadocio, on account of I can't abide Eva, but viewed on its own, Brain Powered has some interesting concepts, a great old-style look, and a soundtrack of mighty power.

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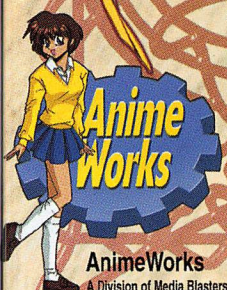
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AR



# SILENT MOBIUS TV VOL. 1

REVIEWED BY DAVE SMITH

• 1999 ANIMEVILLAGE.COM • BANDAI VISUAL

50 MINUTES • ENGLISH SUBTITLED

☆☆☆1/2 ACTION/DRAMA

# デジタル放送システム

アニメリパブリックは妻最新の日本アニメーションを掲載しています。

**Story:** This is actually an old franchise. Asamiya Kia's Silent Mobius manga is around 15 years old if memory serves, and the movies adapted therefrom were butchered by Streamline back in the day. The TV series is brand new, however, with all the flash of a contemporary Bandai production, and should be pretty good once it gets going.

Katsumi Liqueur (steel yourself for some ridiculous names in this show) returns to Tokyo in 2024, 25 years after the magical cataclysm that killed her father. Tokyo is no fun in 2024. Yes, there are flying cars and so on, but there are also Lucifer Hawks, giant Cthulhoid beings that prowl the city, eating people and plotting to bring about some sort of hideous apocalypse. On account of the phenomenal cosmic powers she's inherited from her father, Katsumi is drafted into AMP, the private police force organized to combat the Hawks.

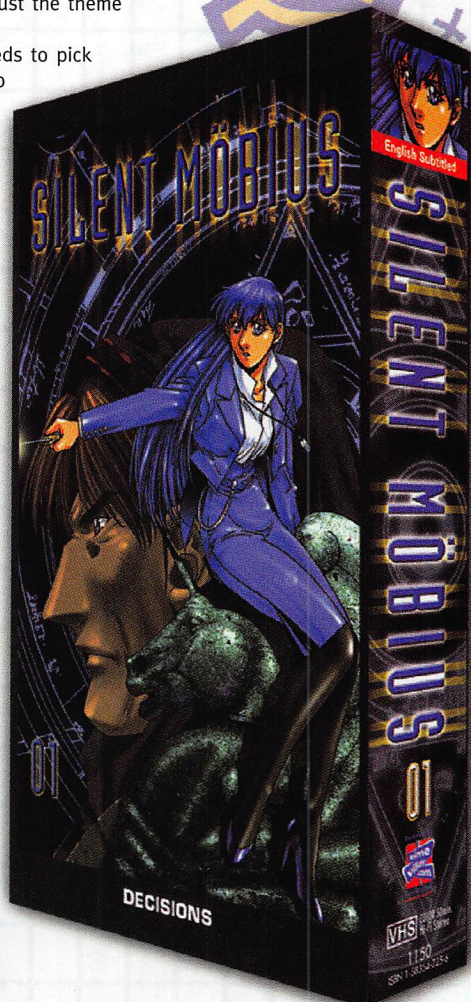
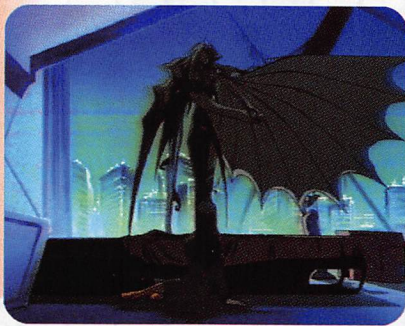
**Highlight:** It's easy to miss, but at one point you see the chalk outline of a Hawk victim. Cute.

**Animation:** There are some moments where the cel animation and CG don't blend right, giving things a bit of a garish look. Overall, though, this is well-crafted TV animation; it mixes flat-shaded AIC colors with less iconic characters to interesting effect.

**Character Design:** Unlike the movies, which used Asamiya's designs, the TV series gives the characters a bit of a modern update (some more than others; Yuki looks exactly like her manga counterpart, for which I'm thankful). It's nothing especially striking, except in the opening, which looks like Masami Obari did key animation. But if you happen to like his distinctive style, it may be a down point.

**Translation:** "Booted out of paradise"? I beg your pardon? Oh, well, it's just the theme song.

**Final Analysis:** The pace needs to pick up a bit, but these first two episodes are solid (I especially like the characterization of the Hawks; it reminds me of the second movie), and I have faith in Kawasaki Hiroyuki's writing; you may remember him from Irresponsible Captain Tylor.



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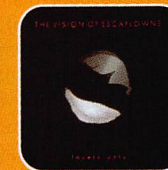
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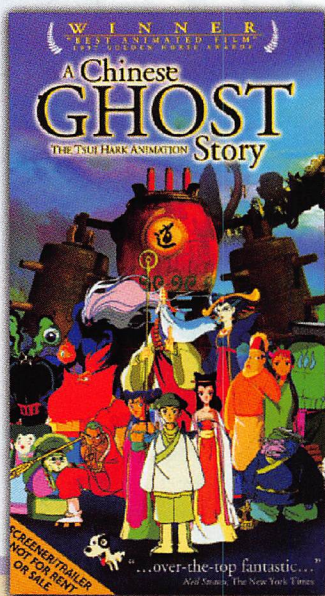
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**A CHINESE GHOST STORY**  
 REVIEWED BY DAVE HALVERSON  
 •1999 PIONEER  
 84 MINUTES • DUBBED IN ENGLISH  
 ★★★ ACTION/DRAMA

**Story:** Unlike *The Cockpit*, I entered into *A Chinese Ghost Story* with high expectations and came away rather disappointed. Winner of the Best Animated Film at the 1997 Golden Horse Awards, its accolades show that either they were short on entries or the contest was judged by small children. A mediocre melding of CG and traditional animation, the show has its moments in terms of action and drama (although it doesn't hold a candle to *Blue Submarine No. 6* which also blends the two styles), but the story, a sort of love/hate/love on-the-run affair that is cute and somewhat compelling, is mauled by the attempt to turn it into a Disney movie for six-year olds. There's nothing worse than a big ol' sappy

rate all the way, as Pioneer's usually are.

**Character Design:** Excellent designs on both of the exorcist characters are to be commended. In fact, all of the character designs are unique and quite inspired. Perhaps they would have been better served in a traditionally animated venue. Red Beard is an especially robust character that will leave a lasting impression with the young'uns.

**Soundtrack:** It's Disney all the way. If you like 'em soft and sweet and uppity, this one is for you.

**Final Analysis:** A recommended purchase for kids 12 and under, but if you're looking for that next big adventure for big people, you may want to pass on this story and go diving for a certain *Blue Submarine*.

Disney-esque lyrical interlude right in the middle of my anime. This one's definitely for the kids.

**Animation:** While the CG is mediocre most of the time, the traditional animation is very good.

**Dubbing:** Pioneer spared no expense. The dub is first-



## 刺激的な2-Dビジュアル



**AWOL-ABSENT WITHOUT LEAVE VOL. 1&2**  
 REVIEWED BY DAVE SMITH

•1999 ANIMEVILLAGE.COM  
 50 MINUTES • ENGLISH SUBTITLED

★★★ ACTION/DRAMA

**Story:** Boy meets girl beneath a silvery moon, champagne flows, a cute kid gets a teddy bear for her birthday, and then everything blows up for no immediately perceivable reason. The opening scenes of *AWOL* are so Weiss Kreuz, it's untrue.

After that, the style settles down and it becomes a reasonably interesting story of the space marines versus the maniacal terrorists. There are some fun concepts: the MacGuffin is a satellite defense system so complex that only one guy can run it, a squeaky-voiced geek in John Lennon glasses with chocolate all over his face. Things take time to get going, though; it's a good thing I received more than volume one for review, because the lead characters don't actually go *AWOL* until at least the fourth episode.

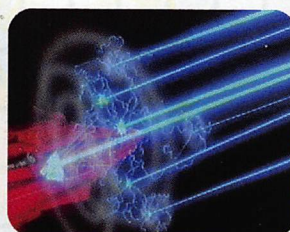
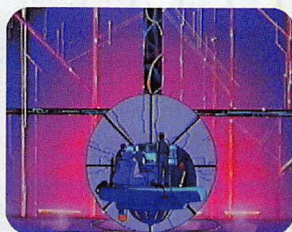
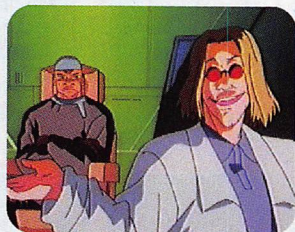
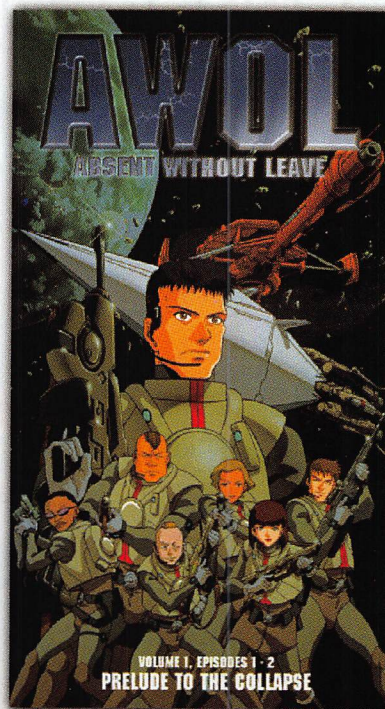
**Character Design:** Maybe not, though, because episode four is when some really awful designs

make themselves known. Culden and Major Hyatt I'm fond of, but Zack, Chris, and Nelson I'm definitely not.

**Animation:** Reminds me of the middle seasons of *G. I. Joe*: after the good old days, but before it was noticeably bad.

**Soundtrack:** BeSTACK has a knack for theme songs that grow on you. "Rocket Dive" is the show's only likable piece of music, but damned if I'm not turning it up to the most painful possible volume.

**Final Analysis:** It starts slow in the first volume, but this is building into something pretty cool in an Appleseed meets *The Dirty Dozen* sort of way. Give the terrorists some personality and improve the quality of the action (there are spots of very weak direction) and we'll be ready to go.



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**EHRGEIZ VOL. 1**  
 REVIEWED BY DAVE SMITH  
 •1999 ANIMEVILLAGE.COM • BeSTACK  
 50 MINUTES • ENGLISH SUBTITLED

☆☆1/2 ACTION/DRAMA

**Story:** In the future, humanity has migrated out into orbiting space colonies, and a war has broken out between Earth and the settlers, fought with new humanoid robots. Ring any bells?

The backstory doesn't really have anything to do with the events on this tape, though, which concerns itself with three as-yet-unrelated plots. A young psychic is doing his best to lead a small faction of the orbiting rebels in a minor guerilla war. Meanwhile, the

Earth navy is hunting down the mysterious "S" with the aid of an even more mysterious gentleman named Arnold. Meanwhile, a Mospeda-esque crew of war veterans, punk kids, and their giant robots are whiling

away the hours on a bombed-out space colony with a life of casual piracy. The one in the middle is the most interesting, probably because it has the least boring characters; Arnold is a hoot in an inscrutable sort of way.

**Animation:** Pretty bland. The character and mechanical design more or less uniformly fail to inspire. It's dated 1997, but the show looks and feels much older.

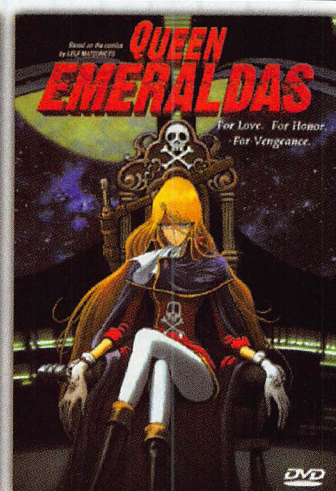
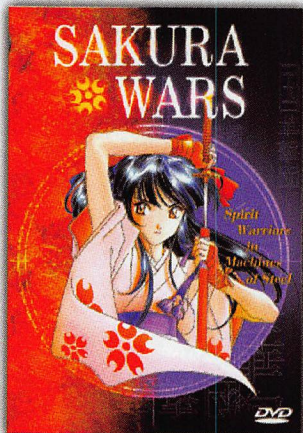
**Soundtrack:** Pedestrian, except for a little nice steel guitar and the opening theme, "Dream Jack," which is TOTALLY F'N FIRE BOMBER~! WOO-HOO!

**Final Analysis:** Not much here to justify the expense. Mecha fans should definitely go for Brain Powered before checking this out.



**ADV FILMS New DVDs**  
 REVIEWED BY DAVE HALVERSON  
 •1999 ADV Films

Just in time for the Holidays, ADV Films is bringing 4 of their best to vivid new life on DVD: Legend of Crystania—The Motion Picture, all 120 glorious minutes of Sakura Wars, Queen Emeraldas, and Ninja Resurrection, with The Revenge of Jubei and Hell Spawn on one blood-soaked DVD! This is a must-own compilation for Ninja Scroll fans (and anyone who likes a good demon-filled joyride). To appease both sides in the bloody dubbing wars each DVD features dubbed and subtitled versions, 15 ADV previews, scene selections,



slide shows, and web contacts. For those of you who missed our reviews on these titles, Sakura Wars scored 4 stars overall, Ninja Resurrection Hell Spawn and The Revenge of Jubei both score a perfect 5, we gave Legend of Crystania 3-1/2 stars, and Queen Emeraldas 4-1/2.

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## GAMERS' REPUBLIC EDITORS' TOP 5

## D. Halverson

1. Blue Submarine No. 6 **Bandai**
2. Cowboy Bebop **Bandai**
3. Magic Knight Rayearth **A-Works**
4. Ninja Resurrection DVD **ADV**
5. The Cockpit **Urban Vision**

## C. Alexander

1. Princess Mononoke **Miramax**
2. Rurouni Kenshin **Sony**
3. Escaflowne **Bandai**
4. Combustible **Guardress**
5. Bastard! **Pioneer**

## D. Smith

1. Walker Machine **Xabungle**
2. Ai no **Kusabi**
3. Mobile Suit ZZ **Gundam**
4. Heavy Metal **L-Gaim**
5. Song of the Wind and **Trees**

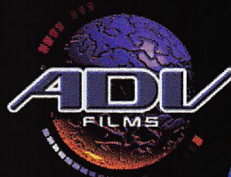
**Gamers' Republic**  
COMPUTER & CONSOLE ENTERTAINMENT MAGAZINE

# anime top 5

adv films and gamers' republic

## READERS' TOP 5

1. Ninja Resurrection **ADV Films**
2. Perfect Blue **Manga**
3. Evangelion **ADV Films**
4. Outlaw Star **Bandai**
5. Magic Knight Rayearth **Animeworks**



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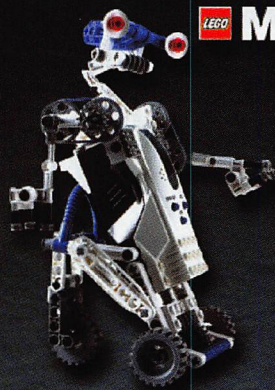
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# GAMERS' REPUBLIC INTERVIEWS

# STATIC-X

Warner Bros. act Static-X phoned Gamers' Republic from the road during their busy tour schedule with Megadeth to discuss the finer points of video games and their musical contribution to Sony's Omega Boost.

**GR: So, you finally got to see and play Omega Boost for the first time. What did you think of the game?**

TC: I thought it was a really cool game. It kind of reminded me of Afterburner, the old Sega game on the Genesis, in the sense that it's a quick game, not really deep or in-depth like Colony Wars. But it's really fast-paced and full of adrenaline.

**GR: What was the process in getting your music placed in Omega Boost? Did you approach Sony or did they approach you?**

TC: Actually, our publicist at Warner Bros. hooked it all up. I told her I was definitely interested in getting our music placed in some games, and she knew who to call. Next thing I know, here's our song on this game.

**GR: Who picked the song "Ostegolation"?**

TC: I think the developers picked it. What probably happened was, the record label sent out a copy of the whole record and they picked whatever song they liked. There wasn't a song in particular that we had in mind. Any one of our songs would be good for video games.

**GR: Given another opportunity to do a video game soundtrack, would you prefer to write a song specifically for the game?**

TC: It would be cool to write a song specifically for a game, but with our whole touring schedule it's kind of hard to really record anything or get away long enough to lay anything down. But maybe in the future, that would be something I'd definitely be interested in.

**GR: Do you like the way "Ostegolation" was used in the game? Would you have chosen another song instead now that you've seen the game?**

TC: It totally fit the whole theme of the game. What's funny is that during one of our days off we went shopping and while we were at Best Buy we went to the game section where they had different games up for demo. I'm walking by and all of a sudden I hear the song and I'm like, "Where's this coming from?" and I look up and it's on Omega Boost.

**GR: Where exactly is the track featured in the game?**

TC: It's actually in the opening menu and options screen. It's not in the actual game. That was my only thing. I really thought it would fit the actual gameplay.

**GR: The video game companies claim that it's to the advantage of the artist to have a song on a major game because of the exposure it provides for the artist, but it seems they rarely promote, let alone even mention, the bands on the soundtracks. Do you feel that being on a game has benefited Static-X in terms of exposure?**

TC: It might. On the back of the insert with all the instructions they do have pictures of the actual album. I think it could help. It'll introduce us to people who don't necessarily listen to Static-X but do play games.

**GR: Do you have a preference for any particular console? What games are you currently playing?**

TC: I have PlayStation on the bus. Games I'm playing right now are NFL Blitz 2000 and O.D.T. I'm stuck on that game right now. Koichi and I play the most but Ken will sometimes play some of the racing games like Formula 1, Cart World Series, and Gran Turismo. I'm mainly the one that stays on the PlayStation for a considerable amount of time. I'm anxious to check out Resident Evil 3 and Gran Turismo 2.

In essence, games for me have always been an escape from the everyday stresses of life. I think it's a great escape. Some people have books, others have computers...for me it's games.

**GR: Do you use cheat codes or do you prefer to beat a game on your own?**

TC: No, although we were on tour with Fear Factory for a considerable amount of time and Raymond, their drummer, kept trying to convince me to get a Gameshark, but I prefer to just go at it and try to beat the game on my own. Eventually I'll end up giving in and use a cheat code or two, depending on how frustrated I am. I'm almost ready to get the codes for O.D.T. I've been stuck on this one level for a month. Other times I'll just take a break for a week or so and come back and try it with fresh eyes.

**GR: Do you find that playing video games ever takes away from practicing and playing your bass?**

TC: There was a point in my life when it did kind of interfere for a little bit, but I ended up getting my priorities straight—I think mainly because I finished that particular game.

**GR: Are you interested in trying out the new Dreamcast?**

TC: I tried it out at a couple of stores and the graphics are sweet. I'm just a little apprehensive, seeing what happened with the Saturn and whether or not developers are going to get behind this system or if they're going to wait and stick around for new systems from Nintendo and Sony. I'm looking forward to PlayStation 2. One of the things I like about it is that it's reverse compatible with all the old PlayStation games and I think this is the first system where it's actually integrated into the system. I can still play all my old games. I have a whole library of Sega Genesis games just sitting at home and I can't use them anymore.

**GR: What are your immediate post-tour plans?**

TC: Well, we'll keep touring with Megadeth until Thanksgiving. And then we'll go to Europe and tour with Type O Negative and Coal Chamber until the middle of December. Then we'll take some time off to just veg out at home and try to write some new songs.



## Audiophiles

What GR is listening to this month



### D Halverson

1. DREAM THEATER  
Scenes from a Memory
2. DAVID BOWIE  
Hours
3. SCORPIONS  
Eye II Eye
4. 311  
Soundsystem
5. FIGHT CLUB  
Soundtrack

### B Fiechter

1. STRAIGHT STORY  
Soundtrack
2. STONE TEMPLE PILOTS  
Album No. 4
3. LIVE  
The Distance to Here
4. DAYS OF THE NEW  
Days of the New
5. PHILIP GLASS/UKATI  
Aguas De Amazonia

### M Hobbs

1. APHEX TWIN  
...I Care Because You Do
2. FIONA APPLE  
When the Pawn...
3. POLYGON WINDOW  
Surfing on Sine Waves
4. HOWARD SHORE  
eXistenZ Soundtrack
5. MATERIAL  
Road to the Western Land

### M Dauriac

1. INCUBUS  
Make Yourself
2. LUSCIOUS JACKSON  
Electric Honey
3. STONE TEMPLE PILOTS  
Shine On box set
4. JAMIROQUAI  
Synkronized
5. BUCKCHERRY  
Buckcherry

### Pooch

1. HANDSOME BOY  
MODELING SCHOOL
2. PINK FLOYD  
So...How's Your Girl?
3. BRIAN MCNIGHT  
Back at One
4. DJ SPOOKY vs. THE FREIGHT  
ELEVATOR QUARTET
5. File Under Futurism

### D Smith

1. DRAGON ASH  
Buzz Songs
2. SEAT BELTS  
Cowboy Bebop
3. BAD RELIGION  
Against the Grain
4. DANCE DANCE REVOLUTION-2nd Remix  
Blanks '77
5. C.B.H.

### E Fear

1. NINE INCH NAILS  
The Fragile
2. BELA FLECK  
UFO TOFU
3. FOO FIGHTERS  
...Nothing Left to Lose
4. BRIAN SETZER ORCH.  
Dirty Boogie
5. EMINEM  
Slim Shady LP

### G Elmquist

1. CHRIS CORNELL  
Euphonia Morning
2. CREED  
Human Clay
3. 311  
Sound System
4. DEATH  
The Sound of Perseverance
5. STEVE VAI  
The Ultra Zone

### G Abraham

1. BREAKBEAT ERA  
Breakbeat Era
2. DJ RAYMOND ROKER  
Altered States of Drum N Bass
3. UNDERWORLD  
Beaucoup Fish
4. THE WISeguys  
The Antidote
5. MASSIVE ATTACK  
Mezzanine

### H Pan

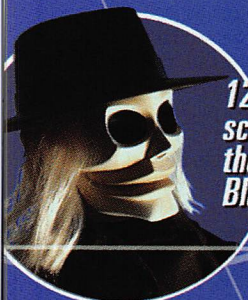
1. ATB  
Movin' Melodies
2. PAUL VAN DYK  
Seven Ways
3. HAPPY2BHARDCORE  
Chapter #3
4. GATECRASHER  
Volume 2-3
5. TranceGlobalNation  
Volume 2-3



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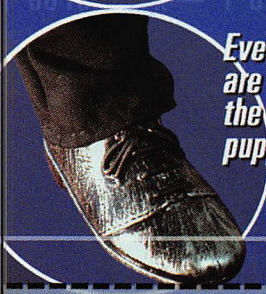


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► **CASTLEVANIA, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 35**

thing else. This is Konami, after all. Can it be that after four years they still don't know their way around the 64? What's the world coming to? The beautiful landscapes that bathed Castlevania IV, Bloodlines, and Symphony of the Night are pretty much gone, and so the mood that this game so desperately needs to evoke never materializes, making for a pretty empty ascent to Drac's abode. There's no Belmont, no whip, no Medusa heads, and although the music is good for a CV, it's quite uninspired. Okay, ready for those meritorious moments yet? Let's completely switch gears now and imagine this game was called Castlevania Side Story, thus taking the sting out.

In terms of its poor status as a sequel, this is a very playable—and with its four characters, re-playable—beginner-to-intermediate platformer. Its forgiving and very generous collision lends itself well to a less seasoned gamer, as do the bosses, which are somewhat impressive but pose little threat. The game also has an assortment of memorable moments and some nicely laid out and choreographed scenarios. It's not like it was torturous to play through CLoB, it's just that I couldn't help imagining what could have been if this game was set up like Goemon's Great Adventure at every turn. I'm also coming off of Jet Force, EWJ 3D, and Rayman 2, so, I'm pretty spoiled in terms of platformers.

In the end, when you set out to further a series, the goal should always be to improve upon it, so one must ask the question: why has Konami, not once but twice shortchanged one of their biggest franchises, knowing full well what we all want? They obliterated Contra on the PS with two non-Japanese-developed mediocre 3D incarnations and now Castlevania has undergone a similar fate. Do they simply not read reviews and listen to the hardcore audience that got them where they are? Nearly every professional and game enthusiast alike who laid hands on Symphony of the Night not only regards it as spectacular but as one of the greatest games ever made. So then, why not get to work immediately on a similar yet even more realized sequel? This question will mystify me as long it's a valid one. ⚡

► **SOUL FIGHTER, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 68**

you won't likely beat many of them your first few times through. The bosses in SF are probably some of the most impressive I've ever encountered in this type of game, and with only five

continues in the arcade mode, you encounter them a lot. Fortunately, the game's lush graphics make each pass as pleasurable as the last. You can change characters between levels in arcade mode, while in the adventure mode you must use the same character throughout, but you can save at the outset of each level. So although you have only one life in adventure mode, you can restart a level by loading your last save game. These two modes offer an interesting choice in terms of balance, depending on how you choose to approach the game's difficulty.

The fighting system in SF offers an array of choices as well, with a combo bar that fills up as you land multiple blows which you can release for massive combo or magic attacks. You can also block, although perfect timing is needed to skillfully use this technique.

SF does have a few minor flaws, like enemies poking through walls, and when you're beat to the ground, the stun is a little long, but in the grand scheme of the game, these do little to detract from the gorgeous environments, detailed textures, dynamic lighting and inspired character design. All of this is made possible due heavily to the fact that SF is a one-player-only game (!), allowing the developers to really fine tune it. I wouldn't mind a sequel on this one with perhaps some vertical elements added in, kind of like a 3D Magician Lord. Soul Fighter even has a compelling story, but you'll have to hear it for yourself; I'm all out of space. ⚡

► **MDK2, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 19**

supply of food. The good doctor's strategy of attack is often somewhat indirect, but he's always finding some way to prevail, even if it means downing plutonium for a Dr. Jekyll-like side effect.

While only one level is complete for the Doctor, his scenario is exhibiting a superbly unique design quality. He begins in the plush living quarters of a ship, where a '50s art style merges with comic-book and traditional science-fiction elements. Against the wall is a juke box scratching out a few tunes, and an elaborate stone-fireplace serves as the centerpiece, casting its warm glow—the shadows cast on the wall are unparalleled in their realism—over a group of plush couches, a kitchen and a bar. The engulfing backdrop of deep space lends the entire scene an intriguing ambience. I can't wait to see what BioWare comes up with next. ✨



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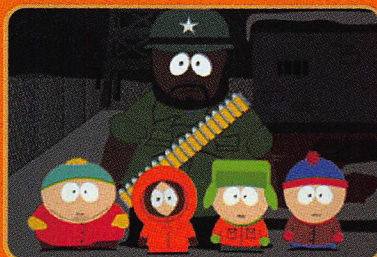


## SOUTH PARK MOVIE

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Who can ever forget that sweet scene when Stan, Cartman, Kyle and Kenny bribe a homeless man to buy them tickets to the R rated Terrance and Phillip movie. Or that touching moment when Saddam swears to his lover Satan "I can change." "It's not my fault that I'm so evil, it's society... society. You see my parents were sometimes abusive and it made... a prick of me."

Just two of the poetic moments in South Park: Bigger Longer and Uncut, where four children's experience at an R-rated movie "Terrence and Phillip: Asses of Fire" leads to the bombing of Canada. But parents and politicians don't look for scapegoats or make snap judgements... Oh yes they do! "Should we blame the government, or blame society, or should we blame the images on TV? No! Blame Canada!" Which is why I really love this movie on so many levels. First of all, it's the best and most honest social satire in a decade or more, and second, it's by far the best musical of all time. Move over, Sound of Music and Oklahoma, South Park kicks your asses! So go out, one and all and help make South Park the biggest selling DVD this holiday season... That's what Brian Boitano'd do! **F A+**



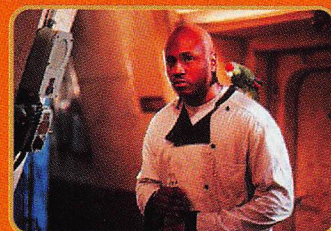
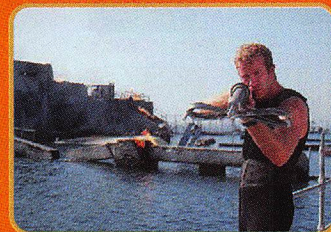
## DEEP BLUE SEA

WARNER BROS. HOME VIDEO • DVD

As we all know, when man attempts to play God and genetically tampers with nature, the result is movie with a lot of gore, violence, death and action. In the case of Deep Blue Sea, the superbly crafted effort of veteran action director Renny Harlin, nature is a group of unusually violent and aggressive great white sharks.

The plot: proteins extracted from the brain of a great white, when manipulated by the wonders of modern science, are the formula for the cure for Alzheimers. To facilitate the process, a beautiful (naturally) young researcher (Saffron Burrows) breaks the genetic code of ethics by enhancing the growth of the brains of the sharks.

Eventually, those shark brains get just a little bit too enhanced, and a group of researchers, huddled around a monitor, note that "sharks can't swim backwards" after observing the sharks swimming backwards. This observation becomes increasingly ominous as the predators find the sense to disable the video cameras tracking their movement, and they quickly decide to exact revenge on everyone who populates the enormous research facility out in the middle of the Pacific. Which leads to a lot of gore, violence, death and action.



But what saves Deep Blue Sea from falling into the pit of bad monster-horror movies is its incredible energy, great sets and skilled direction. The sharks are wholly believable, superbly fashioned wonders of modern CG and animatronics, moving through flooded corridors, ramming down steel doors, and wreaking general havoc on the entire complex. There is one scene in particular that is guaranteed to shock and delight.

Deep Blue Sea is an unexpected thrill, a slick, exhilarating, highly effective monster movie that accomplishes exactly what it sets out to do—entertain. **B**

## THE CUTTING ROOM FLOOR

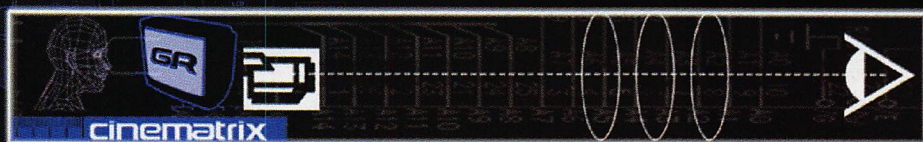


**BUT WILL THERE BE KISSING?:** Lucy Liu (Ally McBeal) has confirmed that she's signed up to be in the upcoming Charlie's Angels movie. 'Nuff said. • **HOLY BANKROLL, BATMAN!** Word has it that two Batman movies are in the works, one possibly aiming to tell the story of Batman's start as a crimefighter, possibly starring Ben Affleck, and a second based in the style and stories of the Batman Beyond animated series, for which reportedly Keanu Reeves is being considered to play the caped crusader. No mention of the Boy Wonder for either project, which indicates they may be good... • **STAR WARS, NOTHING BUT STAR WARS:** Word leaked out of the Lucas camps that they've begun their search for a teenaged Anakin for the next film, and a few days later word leaked out that prospective Anakins really should have an agent, and professional experience. Who'd'a

thought?! • **I SAID, NOTHING BUT STAR WARS:** Confirmed to return in Episode 2 (or whatever they come up with for a name...) are Ewan McGregor (Obi-Wan), Ahmed Best (Jar Jar Binks), and, thankfully, Natalie Portman (who cares what her name was? Girl was lookin' GOOD!). • **DUH DUH DUH DUH DUH DUH WONDER WOMAN:** Warner Bros. apparently has a writer (John Cohen) for a Wonder Woman project, and the top choice for the lead role (although this is early) is Sandra Bullock. I personally don't see it m'self, but I'm sure if I obsess...I mean, think about it enough it'll make sense. Hmmm...lasso of truth...



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# FALLOUT

Should you wish to put pen to paper (or finger to keyboard), please write to:

Fallout, Gamers' Republic, 32123 Lindero Canyon Road, Suite 215,  
Westlake Village, CA 91361 USA (editorial@gamersrepublic.com).

Dear GR,

I am a 40-year-old, college-educated, self-employed male, living in the Midwest. One day, two years ago, I was walking through our local department store with a good sum of cash on hand, just looking for something to buy. I had never owned a video game system, nor given them much thought. But something caught my eye that day in the electronics department. It was a video game based on a subject matter in which I have a great interest. So, after convincing myself to check it out, I bought the game, along with its parent hardware, and headed on home.

I see no need to provide names here. This letter isn't about this or that system. It's about gaming in general. My words have equal applicability for each major platform. A few weeks after that first game, I got another one. This time the main appeal was simply that it looked bizarre. Now my collection had two. Neither of them was anything spectacular. Yet they were satisfying, nonetheless. Then it happened. One day, without warning, I was overtaken by a phenomenon which I now know all true gamers experience on occasion. Along came a certain game. A special game. A game I found to be so remarkably designed, beautifully presented, and ridiculously fun, that playing it became the sole reason for my very existence in the universe! (Well, almost.) Days, weeks, and months went by before I reached the end. And once there, I was immediately ready to start all over again. I had found a new hobby, unlike any other. Since then I've collected several dozen games. Some are crap. Some are good. A few are truly fantastic. My pursuit of those games in that latter category is now a fervent desire, for they are the ones which make gaming such a thoroughly enjoyable pastime. Now and then I'll catch a negative reaction from one person or another in my fellow age group. But I always tell them to chill out. Bowling, horse riding, stamp collecting, and television watching are each the primary passion for millions of people. Whatever. A hobby is a hobby.

Different strokes. I happen to find video games a fascinating form of diversionary entertainment. Let no one believe that this is strictly for kids. It's for anyone who wants it—period. Forty-year-old game players may be as rare as lottery millionaires. But I suspect that is because far too many of us allow the passage of time to age our minds as it does our bodies. That is most unfortunate. The process of maturing should not include losing the ability to have fun. And that which is fun differs for everyone. Physically, yes, I suppose I am middle-aged. Mentally, I hope to never be so old that I can no longer find pleasure in such things. For those of my peers who have not yet done so, I wish you well in developing a similar attitude.

I will age with you, my friends.

Yet I refuse to grow old with you.

And I shall play my video games for as long as their appeal remains.

I really hope that I can do so for at least a few more decades. I'm dying to know what things will be like with a 10,000-bit CPU!

Better late than never,

Daniel Ray

Welcome to the party, pal! Once you start playing games the clock starts to move backwards. That's our secret. —DH

Dear GR:

Just a quick note, to let you know that a kid got stabbed in Saint-Gerard Elementary School in Laval, Quebec over Pokémon cards (Laval is a city near Montreal). The story starts when a little kid (ten years old) brought his newly bought collection of Pokémon cards to school. Another student (twelve years old) stole it from him. And so along came the older brother of the ten-year-old from high school (he's fourteen) to demand that the thief return the cards to his little brother. The thief pulled a knife from his pocket and stabbed the older brother...

I hope this story interests you.

Antoine Vo, Montreal, Canada

The Reverend speaks:

There are many ways to interpret this. Some would say Nintendo is at fault, for creating such an addictive product. Some would say it's the school system's fault, for failing to discipline its charges. Some would say it's the fault of parents, for failing to raise their children properly. Some would say it's the fault of a society that ascribes such value to material nonsense. Myself, it reminds me of the words of Bill Hicks, who once asked, "Does anyone else wonder why we're f---ed up as a race?"

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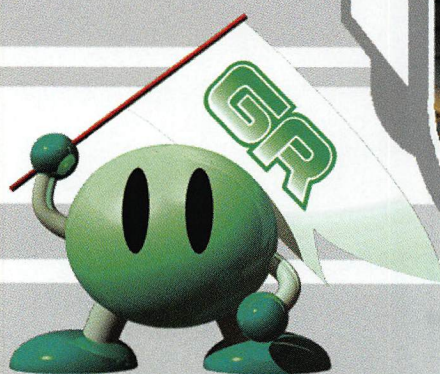
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			70
			55
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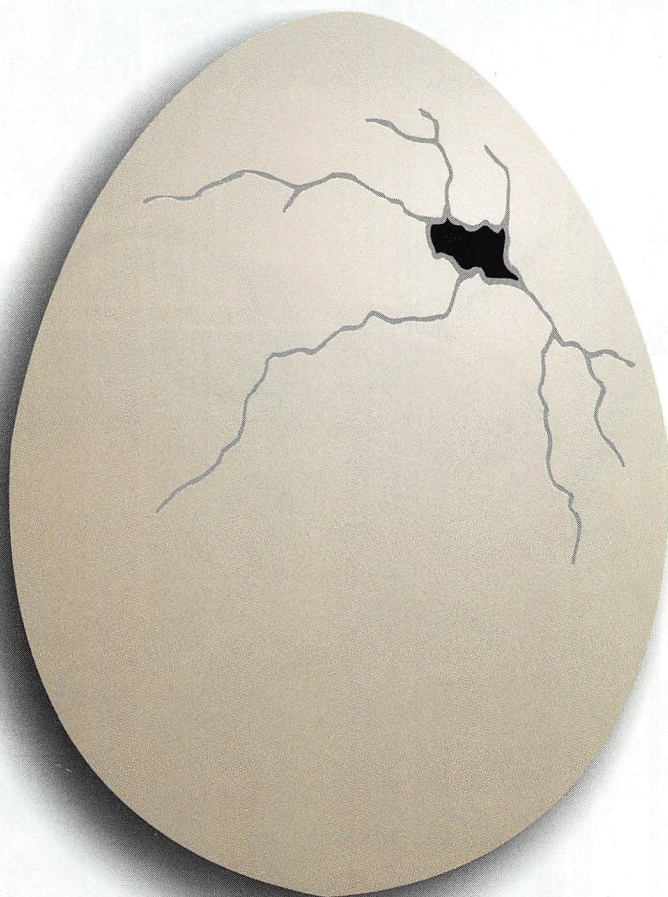


FEBRUARY 2000

Among many other things, next month we'll finally get to review the last installment of what has been one of the biggest and brightest series on the PlayStation, as well as one of the most trend-setting games of the decade, Tomb Raider. You're probably wondering why none of the game magazines have reviews in their January issues, when the game has already shipped. Well, let's just say that Core and Eidos cut it mighty close, once again. We think it's fairly safe to assume that the game is going to be a memorable mix of everything we loved about the first three. Besides Lara's Last Revelation, we've got a lot more in store for you in the February issue that you won't find anywhere else. See you then!

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**#21**  
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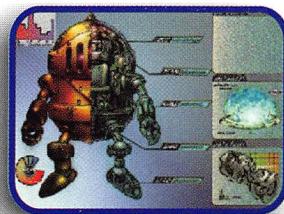




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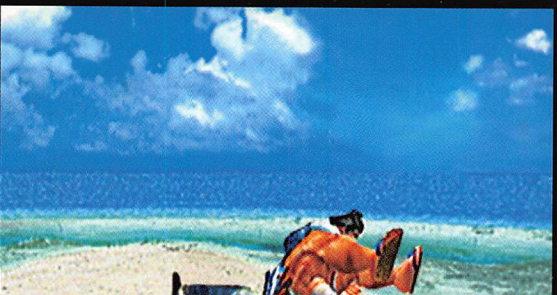
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